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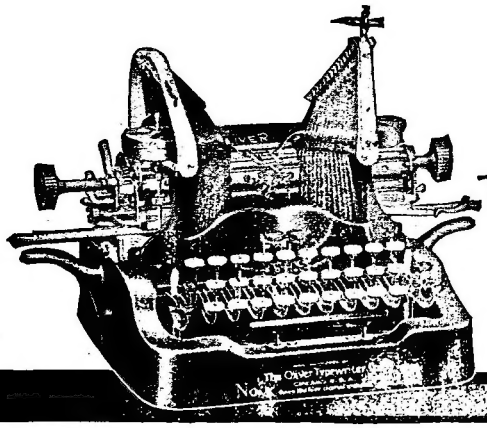

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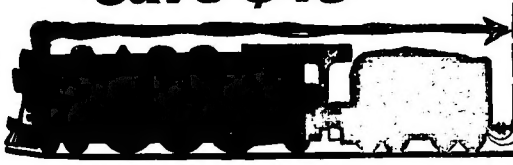

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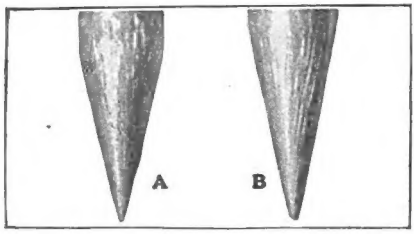

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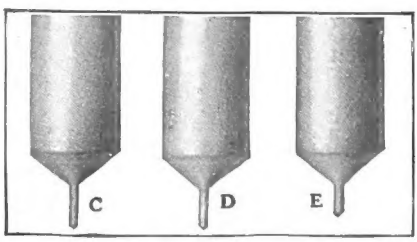

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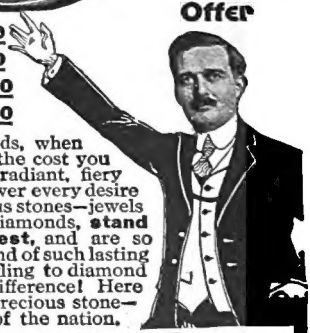

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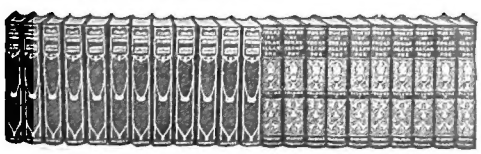

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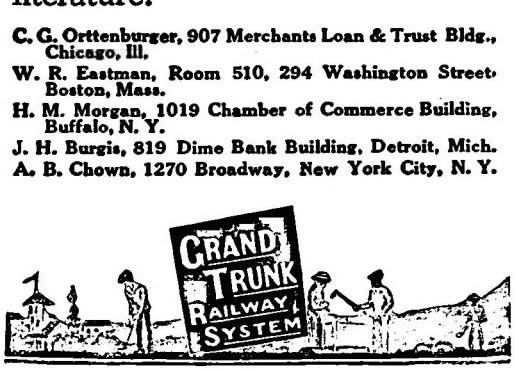

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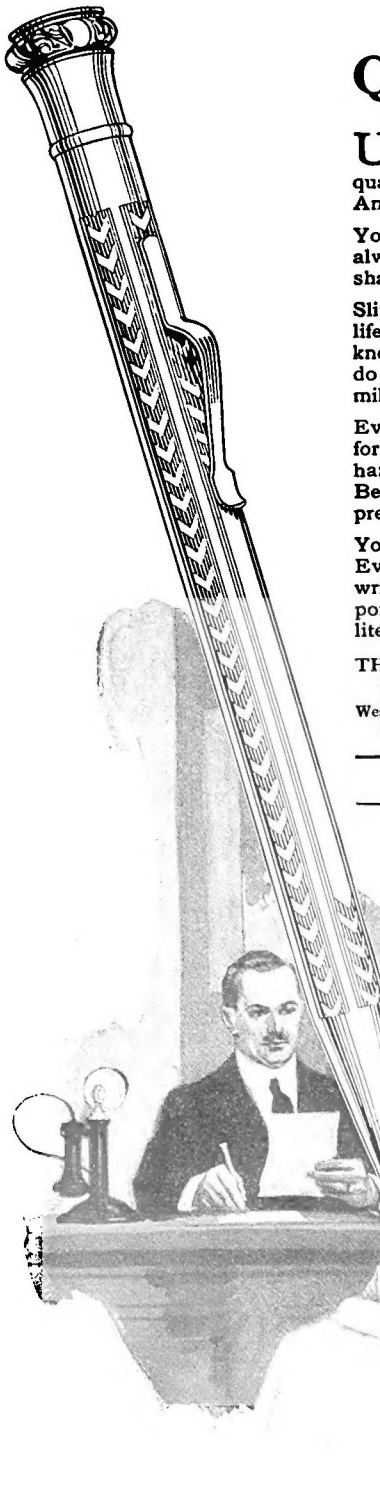

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Cover Design . . . . . **Hibbard V. B. Kline**

Statement of the ownership, management, circulation, etc., required by the Act of Congress of August 24, 1912, of *Adventure*, published semi-monthly at New York, N. Y., for Apr. 1, 1919. State of New York. County of New York. Before me, a Notary Public in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared JAMES F. BIRMINGHAM, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the Business Manager of the *Adventure*, and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management (and if a daily paper, the circulation), etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 443, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit: 1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are: Publisher, THE RIDGWAY COMPANY, a corporation, Spring and Macdougal Streets, New York City. Editor, ARTHUR SULLIVANT HOFFMAN, 223 Spring Street, New York City. Managing Editor, ARTHUR SULLIVANT HOFFMAN, 223 Spring Street, New York City. Business Manager, JAMES F. BIRMINGHAM, 223 Spring Street, New York City. 2. That the owners are: (Give names and addresses of individual owners, or, if a corporation, give its name and the names and addresses of stockholders owning or holding 1 per cent. or more of the total amount of stock.) *Owner:* THE RIDGWAY COMPANY, a corporation, Spring and Macdougal Streets, New York City. *Stockholders:* THE FEDERAL PUBLISHING COMPANY, a corporation, 15 Exchange Place, Jersey City, N. J. THE BUTTERICK COMPANY, a corporation, 223 Spring Street, New York City. GEORGE B. BLACK, 812 Lincoln Avenue, Mendota, Illinois. EMILY JOSEPHINE DONNER, Beachwood Hotel, Summit, New Jersey. W. H. GELSHENEN, 100 William Street, New York City, N. Y. H. F. MORSE, 3 West 46th Street, New York City, N. Y. LAURA J. O'LOUGHLIN, 156 Ridge Street, Glens Falls, N. Y. MRS. ARETHUSA POND, San Remo Hotel, New York City, N. Y. ERMAN J. RIDGWAY, 280 Broadway, New York City. AUGUSTUS VAN WYCK, 149 Broadway, New York City. R. A. VAN WYCK, 149 Broadway, New York City. G. W. WILDER, Butterick Building, New York City, N. Y. BEN. F. WILDER, Butterick Building, New York City, N. Y. MARIE A. WILDER, Butterick Building, New York City, N. Y. 3. *That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent. or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: (If there are none, so state.)* None. 4. That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds, or other securities than as so stated by him. 5. That the average number of copies of each issue of this publication sold or distributed, through the mails or otherwise, to paid subscribers during the six months preceding the date shown above is. (This information is required from daily publications only.) J. F. BIRMINGHAM, Business Manager. Sworn to and subscribed before me this 31st day of March, 1919. CECIL L. WAHL, Notary Public, Kings County, Certificate filed New York County. (*My commission expires March* 30, 1920.) [Seal.] Form 3526.—Ed. 1916.

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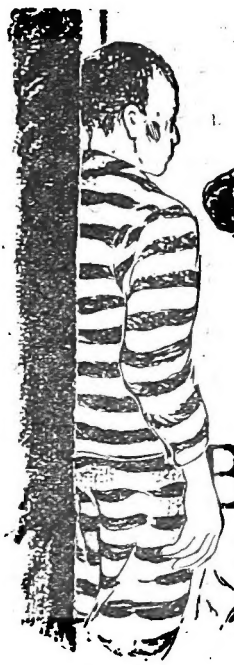

Adventure
JUNE 18, 1919, VOL. 21, NO. 6
Registered in United States Patent Office

The HUMAN BLOODHOUND—

A COMPLETE NOVELETTE

By Capt. Robt. S. Carpenter

A SMALL group of Secret Service men were lounging in the waiting-room which served them as a club at headquarters. These men were assigned to specially prosecute violations of the laws governing the financial obligations of the United States. Cigars and pipes were going freely, and the talk, as usual, had drifted round to the perpetual riddle of contention—Thomas A. Black, the most interesting figure in crookdom to these close observers of the characters and habits of conspirators against the Government.

A person could always start a vigorous argument by mentioning Thomas A. Black in the hearing of any member of the Secret Service. There was hardly an operative but who dreamed of snapping his bracelets on Thomas A. Black's wrists.

Thomas A. Black was the most expert counterfeiter the Government had ever known. He was a skilled engraver, able to reproduce an exact likeness of the currency issued by the Government. He had foiled the banks and public for years with his deceiving counterfeits.

Two of the men present had had their chance of trying their mettle against his and had failed. Warren, the ranking member of the group, had had his try eight years before. Black had passed fifty thousand dollars of counterfeit ten- and twenty-dollar gold certificates on the Forty-Second National Bank and had written one of his displeasing notes to the chief of the Secret Service to acquaint him with the fact, after it was too late, of course, for the information to be of any particular value.

Warren had fallen down hard; Black simply evaporated into thin air along with the fifty thousand dollars genuine money exchanged for his perfect counterfeits, leaving no hint of a trail to be followed. Six months later he bobbed up serenely in New Orleans with a beautiful imitation fifty-dollar gold certificate, which no one would have attributed to him if he had not taken pains to acquaint the chief of it by mailing an exasperating note just before he vanished, to appear in the same fashion months later a thousand miles away.

Moody, the second man of the group with personal experience, was not speaking of the affair—he had come off with even less credit than Warren.

It was Warren, the brilliant star of the Secret Service, who had been holding forth

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on this occasion with his pet theory that there was no such person as Thomas A. Black in the flesh; that the many crimes credited to him were actually the work of as many different people; that the man who signed himself as Black was only a bug with a mania for taking credit or discredit upon himself for the work of other men. It was a plausible theory, because Black had dealt in so many different financial frauds that it seemed scarcely possible for one man to have committed them all.

His apparent excellence at disguise also led into doubt, as all descriptions of him varied even more than the details of his crimes. One account described him as past middle-age, bent, shrunken and feeble, with sandy-gray beard and thin gray hair. Another placed him in the prime of his forties, erect, robust and hearty, clean-shaven and with black hair. Still others varied between these extremes.

"You can make a note right now that this Black is only a nut with the big idea that he can claim any crime against the Government that he sees in the newspapers," Warren stated defiantly.

The men about him nodded, half convinced and unable in any case to dispute the theory.

Warren was a good man, easily the best of the group, with a long list of successes to his credit. There was a certain deference to his views even when his hearers disagreed with them, and there was a general laugh when Robert Carter spoke up with his absurd contradiction and still more ridiculous boast that Warren was all wrong and that he —Carter—would bring Black in eventually to be measured and mugged. Carter himself flushed as the laugh went round; he had been thinking aloud rather than intending to argue. His embarrassment was so great that even Warren, who was generally inclined to take offense at any disagreements with his views, did not resent the remark.

"Oh, you will, eh?" He removed his cigar to regard Carter humorously. "Well, when you do, remember what I said, 'You will bring in a doddering old bug who has been reading more newspaper crook stuff than is good for him and who is trying to kid us along that he is the biggest crook loose.' "

Carter was embarrassed for only a moment, but he clung to his point.

"You may be right, Warren, and you ought to know. But I've got a hunch Black is the guy behind all these jobs, and some day I'll bring him in like the rest of the wise guys who think they can get away with it. I may be kidding myself, but I've got a hunch—that's all."

A plodder by nature, deliberate, steady-going, painstaking and doggedly persistent, Carter seemed to have been designed for a Secret Service operative by the human "bloodhound" instinct bred in him to follow the trail and, as the bloodhound itself would do, press persistently on until he had his victim at bay. It was this quality that had given him the name "Human Bloodhound," which was a continual humiliation to Warren, who after twenty years was only Warren to crook and public alike.

Carter was mildly pleased with the compliment of his nickname. After all, the man the criminal really fears is not the brilliant analyst who can glance at tobacco ashes and tell offhand that they were left by a "one-eyed, lame man, five-feet-eight in height and wearing a soft shirt." The Secret Service operative who really frightens such men is the type of "man-hunter" who will follow them across asphalt streets and desert sands as a bloodhound on a fresh scent. It lessens his faith in his ultimate resources for flight, weakens his nerve and rattles his wits.

There will always be unexplained crimes which can not be laid at the door of any definite offender, but what really nerves the criminal against the powers of the law is the erroneous idea that it is possible to get away. The moment he begins to feel that the world is not big enough to hide him, that moment his nerve begins to crack, and he either quits the game for something safer or loses his head and steps into the trap.

EVER since Black's appearance Carter had been preparing himself for the task of following him when his opportunity came. He knew more about Black and his record than any man in the Service.

Warren was still talking on his pet theory, with now and then a sly slap at Carter, when a bell rang indicating that he and Carter were wanted in the chief's office. His first words took away their breath.

"Warren, here's a telephone message from Bellevue Hospital saying they have a dying man there who has some valuable

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information to give us regarding Black. Carter, you go with Warren and, if you strike a trail, go to it hard; don't wait for orders—just jump. With any luck we ought to grab him this time."

They went out together. One of the big Service automobiles drew up to the door and they drove quickly away.

Warren laughed sarcastically.

"All keyed up? I suppose this is where you get a lead and make good on that 'bring in' stuff you spilled back at the office."

"If this guy can only give me a lead on Black," he began soberly.

Warren laughed.

"If."

"We'll see when we get there, Warren. Let it go until then."

J. L. Scott was still conscious and still embittered by a burning hatred which seemed to keep him alive far more than the skill of the physicians who were watching him with the keen, puzzled attitude with which they observe men who should be dead by all rules of nature and yet who stubbornly refuse to surrender. He had already made and signed a statement, and the doctor in charge would have denied admission to the Secret Service men had not Scott himself overruled the decision.

"What's the big idea, Doc?" he asked in a painful whisper. "You say I ought to be dead right now and that I haven't got a chance in a million of pulling through, don't you?"

"Your injuries are likely to prove fatal, I am afraid," said the cautious doctor.

Scott sighed impatiently.

"Then what's the good of trying to make it twenty minutes instead of fifteen? That big guy is the one they call the Bloodhound, isn't he? I want to talk to him. Never mind that other guy. The Bloodhound gets my bet every time."

Carter seated himself at the bedside while Scott continued.

"Never mind the dope I signed; I didn't tell the real goods in that statement—too many to see it to suit me. This is personal for you; that's why I asked them special to shoot you up to see me before I cash in. I gave them the low-down on this guy 'King' or 'Black,' all right, but I didn't tip them off to the way he might be nabbed. I was saving that for you."

"All right," said Carter. He was very much excited, but the effect of emotion on him made him even less given to nerves and exclamations than normally.

"You see, I got on to him by accident," said Scott. "We were framing a big job together, counterfeit Liberty Loan stuff—but that don't matter; it's all in the statement, anyway. Black used to come up to my room while we waited for things to get right for the job, during which time he was known to me only as 'King.'

"He was a good planner, I'll say that for him; I never knew any other guy that took so much trouble to figure out the fine points. Well, today when we were figuring it out all over again, he pulls a letter out of his pocket to make a sketch for me. It's laying face down on my table when a puff of wind comes in and shoots it square into my mits right side up so I can't help seeing what it says. It was short and done in typewriting; so I got it all before King could catch a breath. It went about like this:

" 'You can't hide from me, Tom Black, anywhere under the sun. I'll find you wherever you go and however you squirm. One year more, Black, before you pay for Mary Birdsell!'

"It was signed 'George Dickson,' and I'd hardly got the drift of it when he plunged a knife in me, and it was good night until I came to on the floor in a pool of blood. It was done so quick I never had time to even lift a hand in defense, and me with a gat right on me all the time, too. Lightning ain't in the same class with that bird. Don't get reckless when you go after him."

The interview ended, Carter turned to Warren, who greeted him with a snarl.

"You certainly are not falling for that dope, are you?"

Carter only shrugged his shoulders and said:

"Worth looking into, anyway. I've got some dope that is not in that signed statement which makes it look possible. Tell the chief, will you, I'll report when there is something to say?"

ATLANTA Prison doors swung open and closed again, and that strange, chilled, horrible sensation of confinement enveloped Robert Carter as he made his way to find his old, trusted friend, Chaplain Lee.

He was kept waiting nearly an hour.

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During that time, sitting where he commanded a view of the corridor, he saw visitors arriving, most of them broken, crushed, though not all of them were poorly clad. Only one figure of them all arrested his attention and impressed itself upon his mind. This was a girl, certainly not over twenty-two. She carried herself erect and graceful, and even in this place of sorrow and shame she walked as a queen might have walked—proudly, head held high, her eyes bright.

She wasn't pretty, Carter told himself; the word did not quite suit. She might have been if she had not held herself so relentlessly in check. He wondered what she would be like if she were laughing happily as a carefree child. She passed on, but he seemed unable to wipe out the vision of her from his mind and was relieved when Chaplain Lee finally came and apologized for the delay.

Carter outlined his plan briefly, but the chaplain disagreed stubbornly. He was not in the least in favor of the deceiving work of a stool-pigeon, and he fought bravely to spare the intended victim the disappointment and seemingly unnecesary unhappiness that would follow. It accomplished nothing, in the first place, and only tended to undo and destroy the confidence he was striving to build up in the minds and hearts of the men in his care.

On the other hand, Chaplain Lee trusted Carter. He knew him for the efficient, conscientious worker he was and finally permitted himself to be persuaded to aid him in the project Carter outlined.

And so it came to pass that Robert Carter, now Tom Jones, Convict 5876, was locked in an oblong cell, lighted by a single bulb in its ceiling. Against one wall were two bunks, one a scant two feet above the other, each with a gray blanket to identify it as a bed. There was no other furniture, and the gray, flat walls were unbroken by ventilators; the air was dead and humid, and an odor of caged humanity lay heavily upon it.

There was little need for him to "pretend" as he stood listening to the guard's harsh commands, familiar as he was with prison and its ways. A kind of hysterical horror seized him at the thought of being penned in this close cave, at the foul, poisoned air, at the ugly sounds which came from the close, crowded, huge cell-block. It was not very difficult to plan a pretended career as a convict, but it was far from easy to bear its first brute horrors, even though a word would bring release!

The man on the edge of the lower bunk looked up without changing his position, his elbows on his knees, his chin on upturned palms. Only his brows and the eyes beneath moved and, as if the single, searching glance had told him all he wished to know, returned to their fixed stare at the opposite wall.

Carter regarded him silently, his own suffocation lessening as he realized that this man had spent nearly three thousand nights here—three thousand such nights as this, with always the added weight of the years still to be lived inside these walls before release should come.

Suddenly he saw a new light on the punishment to which he had been the means of sending so many of his fellow men. Here was supposed to be an equal justice, a common price to pay for sin. But it could not be equal. There were men here who found the shelf-bed as comfortable as any they had ever known; who did not feel the suffocation of the tainted air; who were content to be warm and fed and sheltered.

And there were other men, like this man; men who had lived cleanly and who knew the better side of life; men whose tortured minds reach out beyond the bars and walls which hold their bodies; men to whom every detail of imprisoned life was misery and wretchedness. This surely was not an even break. The one suffered by far more than the other.

Carter finally found his voice and said—"I'm sorry to be forced on you, sir."

It was the natural thing to say, but the unusualness of bringing formal courtesy into the brute savagery of prison life did not occur to him. He only knew that the man on the edge of the bunk had been a gentleman and that an apology for intrusion was the least that was his due.

George Dickson's eyes flashed with a sudden, strange light. He straightened, got to his feet, nodded.

"That's good to hear," he said in a voice that carried a suggestion of gentleness. "I had about forgotten that there was such a thing as courtesy. It is no intrusion, though I can't say you are welcome; there is little enough air for one."

Carter studied him, keenly observing the

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uncanny shagginess of the brows, the close-cropped hair, the eyes below narrowed to mere points of light, the clean line of the nose, the motionless grim lips. It was a face like a mask, a face that was lifeless except for the eyes and the heavy brows that shadowed them. There was something deadly about these—something cruel and yet fine, like the long, clean lines of a sword.

"I'm sorry," Carter said again.

"You had better take the lower bunk," Dickson said. "It's hard enough the first night. I am accustomed to it, and I'll be able to breathe in the upper—you wouldn't."

SO HE let himself down on the edge of the lower bunk, leaning forward to avoid the upper, which cruelty or carelessness had placed so low that only a dwarf could have remained upright between them.

Silence fell, and, as he planned his best way of beginning, Dickson aided him unexpectedly.

"It makes it easier if you tell what you were sent up for," he said quietly; "not that I'm curious."

"That's white of you." Carter was honestly grateful for the suggestion.

"I suppose everybody says the same thing—they are all innocent. It happens to be true in my case. I'm here in some one else's place. They proved it, all right. No one had unlimited access to the engraving department excepting myself, and they found the plates for making genuine currency in the bottom of my trunk. Some one planted them there during my absence; some one made sure they would get me. They made it worse because I couldn't tell how the plates came into my possession. I've got ten years to think it over," he gulped convincingly, "and the guilty fellow is out there, happy and free, spending the money he made from the plates that I was accused of stealing."

Carter stopped, feeling Dickson's eyes on him and not daring to meet them.

"They could have taken one look at you and known better," replied Dickson. "It is evident at a glance that you are no crook, and, in the position you held, you would be a fool to leave engraved plates in your trunk, which would be found and condemn you. They are all such well-meaning muddleheads; all fact-worshipers—as if facts were not the most accomplished liars in the world. But there is something on the other side of the ledger; you'll come through without being broken by it.

"The thing to keep a man's grip in here is that he must remember he has a debt to pay when he gets out, and he must be in shape to pay it. Nothing else can do it but that. I believe they frown on the idea of revenge in fiction and hold that the right plan is to forget and forgive," he laughed. "We know better in here."

Carter looked up.

"I'm afraid to think about that. I thought I would grow insane during the trial and after being convicted, thinking of him—rich, free and happy."

"Not happy," replied Dickson. "Don't you believe that for a minute. And not free either, because the freest part of him is shut up in here with you, and the freest part of you is out there with him. They have put your body in a cell, and his thoughts had to go with it. He is laying awake now wondering how long you will stay here; what you are feeling and thinking; what you'll do when you get out; wondering if he hasn't left some trace by which you will track him; whether you will go to the police with it if you find him or whether you'll deal directly with him.

"Oh—don't make any mistake about that. You are not facing a happy time of it here, but I would hate to change places right now with the fellow who sent you here."

Carter fought back a surge of triumph. This was progressing swifter than he had dared expect, for Dickson had already talked to him as he had refused to talk in court and to the prison chaplain, as well as stool-pigeons, many of whom had tried him.

"You would advise me to fix my mind on that; does it help?" Carter asked.

"Help? You'll see. Hug it, hold on to it, never let your mind slip away from it for a second. It is the one thing that grows stronger with time. Prison wipes out all other emotions: ambition; hope, love, faith—they don't live in a cell. But revenge—no, that never dies. I have been here over eight years. I was past forty when I came. I've breathed rotten air and lived on rotten food and rubbed elbows with the refuse of civilization in a perfect incubator of disease, but shake hands and see how you like my grip."

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Wonderingly Carter obeyed. The fingers closed lightly over his own. He was rather proud of his own strength of forearm, but, as if without effort, a sudden pressure forced his hand to open. He was helpless. This cell-bleached wreck of a man was actually stronger than he.

Dickson laughed grimly.

"See; somewhere there is a man who has had that grip on his throat every night since I came here. He looks behind him when he walks in the streets; when he sees a headline about an escape or a prison pardon his heart skips a beat. He knows what is coming to him but knows not when or how."

Carter felt both encouraged and gratified. Better and better; a very little more cultivation of this man would yield him the thing he must know. George Dickson knew where to look for Thomas A. Black. If he would tell—if he only would tell!

Dickson showed him the simple exercise by which he had built up his strength in the eight years that he had spent between those gray walls. He was amazingly strong, a thing of steel springs and wires, but he said nothing more about the man outside. Carter knew better than to pry; he must wait for the story to come naturally.

HE HAD himself assigned to the prison library, where Dickson was employed and where Chaplain Lee could lighten the privations for both without straining the rules too far, and during the day, now, he had frequent chances to talk with Dickson. But time dragged by, and he made no progress. Dickson would not talk except in generalities, and Carter, for all his unlimited patience, began to doubt the wisdom of his scheme.

Already he had carried it pretty far. It had needed the connivance of the president and the prison board as well as the warden and the chaplain; he had even taken pains to fake a convincing case against himself, under an assumed name, and have it printed in the papers as real news. But it began to look as if the effort had been thrown away. Dickson would not talk, even under very skilful temptation. There would have to be another way, and Carter finally found it.

The prison library occupied space directly back of the warden's office in the south wing. Except for the barred windows, it did not differ from most of its kind. The door from the corridor led into a stack-room instead of the usual antechamber. Built three feet apart, the double book-cases ran the length of the room, with space left for passage at short intervals.

At the far corner, under the high, narrow window, stood a bench with small binders, presses and tools at which the convict employees repaired such books as showed signs of heavy service. This in particular was Dickson's task until Carter's arrival gave him assistance and permitted the overworked chaplain to surrender the more important business of censoring applications to the older prisoner. Dickson understood something of this: there was sound judgment in supervising the books issued to convicts as a reward of good behavior.

If you are in any sense trying to reform a man, much can be accomplished by giving him something to read which will carry your message to him more effectively than your own word of mouth, and yet the ordinary "uplifting" books would tend to destroy the purpose rather than aid it. No one resents a forcible effort to elevate his thoughts more than a man already enduring the confinement of his body. Drive a prison population to attend religious services, and you make quite sure of deafening ears; make attendance voluntary and dependent upon good conduct, and bad men will look forward eagerly to it as a break in the monotony at least, if nothing more.

It was a few weeks after his entry as a prisoner that Carter made a great discovery. In working at the bench, he dropped a loose sheet from the book he was repairing between the wall and the bench and, to recover it, dragged the heavy work-table away from the wall. Beyond, completely hidden until now, gaped a great hole in the plaster and lath, revealing the outer shell of brickwork.

At a glance, the work of making that break in the wall must have cost years of patience; a bit of plaster today and another tomorrow and a third perhaps in a week. Carter and Dickson had the room to themselves at the time, and the older prisoner came quickly to the Bloodhound's side at the latter's suppressed exclamation.

He stared at the hole.

"That must have been Johnston," he said half to himself. "He was here ten years, probably worked at it all that time; poor devil, he died in the hospital just after I came in—and this was almost done, too.

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See—he has even scraped the mortar from between the last shell of brick; a good shove would send it tumbling. Poor old Johnston, he must have died hard with that knowledge on his soul. Another week and he'd finish outside. Pretty tough."

Carter breathed hard.

"We can do it, Dickson," he whispered; "that shell will go at a touch, and the shrubs hide the hole outside, too. You can see from the window, and we'd be outside the wall, too. There's no guard on this side after five; we could get leave to work late and step out without a hint of trouble."

Dickson's hand shook as he felt cautiously about the edges of the bricks, and his face took a sudden, unusual touch of color. Carter knew that he was weighing the certainty of another year's delay against the chance of forfeiting his good conduct by his failure in attempt at escape. He saw the man fight out his inner battle; saw the decision lean to immediate escape. Dickson thrust the bench back into place hastily and moved away. Carter followed him.

"We'll need clothes and money and a car," Dickson whispered. "They'd have us back in an hour if we walked out like this. Wait until next week and I'll fix it up. Visiting-day is almost here and I've got a way of managing things like this. You leave it to me, son; it can be done, and done safely, if we can take our time and keep our heads."

Carter nodded and went back to his work. The longest week of his life intervened before Dickson could tell him the details of the plan.

"We'll make it Tuesday night. I have fixed it up with the chaplain so that we can work overtime to catch up on the binding. There will be a car and clothes waiting for us just across the block, where there's a church to throw a nice shadow to make it sure that nobody will happen to look out of the window and spot us. I'll see you clear of this, son; and, if you're broke, I've got enough to tide you over. I owe you something for this, you know; but, if you take my tip, you'll rest up a while before you take any chances. It is different with me; I have no time to wait or waste."

His jaws closed grimly, and the brows gathered above the glinting eyes.

Carter whispered his thanks. Again another waiting of three days that dragged into eternities, and then at last came their chance. They worked side by side at the bench while night thickened beyond the barred window and the stars brightened in the narrow strip of sky. The minutes dragged; they did not talk, as if by common consent each preferring to hug his own thoughts in secret.

THE prison clock boomed nine times, and Dickson moved closer to the window, staring out across the darkened strip of lawn and shrubbery in which the warden took so much pride. Suddenly he stiffened. A man passed casually along the street and paused to light a cigaret. He made clumsy work of it, and three times the flame flickered out before he gave it up and resumed his walk.

"All ready, son."

Dickson dragged the heavy bench from the wall and slipped into the space beyond it. Carter heard the gasping breath as he strained his wonderful strength against the last layer of mortar.

There was a sudden yielding of the barrier. A noise of falling bricks. Carter was in the spirit of the thing now; it was astonishingly real to him as he knelt and wormed his way through the gap after Dickson.

The older man crouched in the shelter of the banked shrubs and leaned back into the hole to pull the bench back against the gap. It would give them a better chance by concealing the avenue of escape for a time at least, and, until the guards beat through these bushes and found the broken wall, there would be nothing to show how they had broken free.

As for pursuit, Carter knew perfectly that he had nothing to fear from that quarter. Chaplain Lee with the help of the chief had managed matters well. A prison commission who flatly refused to consider a pardon for George Dickson was willing enough to authorize the warden of Atlanta to release the convict in the custody of Robert Carter, and the formal document which the commission signed to that effect did not specify the method in which that release was to be carried out.

It would not go into the prison records as an escape and therefore would not count against Dickson's previous good conduct allowance if the warden obligingly made a

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breach in the prison walls and allowed Dickson and Carter to slip through instead of leaving by regulation exits.

Laws and rules can easily be strained a little when the needs demand. Carter's plans had strained them rather far, but, as he and Dickson slipped across the dim lawn, dodging under one shadow to another, the Bloodhound had at least some of the sensations of a real prisoner actually engaged in breaking free. He was breathing quickly when they reached the friendly darkness of the street beyond and crept at last to the side of the big car waiting in the blot of inky night beside the empty church.

Dickson whispered something to the driver and half lifted Carter into the automobile. The car moved away, gathering speed quickly. He drew down the curtains and snapped on a tiny light in the roof. On the seat lay two complete outfits of good clothes. Dickson swiftly shed his prison uniform while Carter followed his example in silence. They dressed quickly in spite of the swaying car, and, when they had finished, Dickson gathered up the cast-off clothes and the coarse shoes and rolled them into a compact bundle. Only then did he put up the side curtains.

Then he said softly:

"It looks as if we had managed it, son. We are on the hill road, and by ten o'clock we ought to be safe in town, where it is going to be hard to find us. With any luck the alarm won't be sounded much before that; they were going to lock us up at nine-thirty, and they will make sure before they conclude we have made a getaway. I think we are almost out of the woods, right now."

He lifted his hands in a gesture of relief.

Even then Carter had a pang of self-reproach at the prospect of returning the man to his cell when the need of him had ceased. He had not intended to be guilty of any soft weakness for his tool. Dickson was a crook, and his punishment, however hard it bore upon him, was his just due. And yet, as they jolted over the uneven road, Carter knew it was going to be hard to turn traitor to this man who sat beside him. But he thrust the thought out of his mind. The main thing was to catch Thomas A. Black. Nothing else mattered.

They passed safely through the darkened streets of the city. It was a little past ten when they reached a small house on the edge of the great Southern metropolis, a survival of its cotton-raising days still lingering with a small remnant of its ancient acres still left open about it.

Here the car stopped, and Carter followed Dickson to the ground. The driver left the wheel and to Carter's amazement flung eager arms about Dickson's neck and kissed him again and again between words that were half-sobs. He stared blankly until Dickson, still holding the figure with one arm, turned to him.

"Sorry, Jones; I forgot you didn't know my daughter. Clara, this is Tom Jones, who helped me get away."

"Clara." The name seeped in.

Carter's ears clanged like a funeral bell. He strained his eyes in the starlight, but he knew, even before they made it wholly certain, that the girl who had persistently remained in his thoughts throughout the long weeks in prison was the same girl he had seen that first day while waiting for Chaplain Lee; a crook's daughter and now, by her part in tonight's affair, a crook herself in fact if not in intention.

"Pleased to meet you," said Carter.

His voice was husky, and the tone of it helped to make his masquerade convincing. The girl greeted him with a distinct show of aloofness in her tone, which was kindly enough but somehow contrived to impress upon Tom Jones, escaped convict, that there was a vast difference between him and such a convict as George Dickson.

Carter suppressed a sudden impulse to laugh. After all, it was funny. To steer clear of women for years and years, only to lose his head at the last of it on the strength of a casual glance or two to a girl who belonged on the other side of the line which divides the just from the unjust. It might be his duty to "bring in" Clara Dickson one of these days, and he wondered suddenly whether he would do it if it came to that.

"Come in, Mr. Jones," said the girl quietly. "Father will look after you while I get rid of this car."

"Couldn't we do it for you, Miss Dickson?" asked Carter.

"Scarcely, unless you are anxious to go back so soon," she replied. "You must keep very much out of sight for the present. I'll see you later, perhaps. Good night, father; be careful, won't you? No needless risks, promise?"

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SHE resumed her seat at the wheel, and the car moved into the night. Carter and Dickson watched it until it merged into the shadows of the road. They then went into the old house, where Dickson lighted a lamp and revealed a sparely furnished room, carpetless and dusty. Food had been placed on the bare table, and they ate silently, each busy with thoughts which made conversation unnecessary.

When they had finished, Dickson found cigars in a small box on the shelf. Carter rarely smoked, but now with weeks of practically complete deprivation of tobacco behind him he felt as if there couldn't be very many joys in life keener than the first satisfying puff. They smoked silently until Dickson spoke.

"What are you going to do, Jones? Got any place to go—any friends? What's ahead of you, anyway?"

Carter shrugged his shoulders.

"I can't show up back there. I must keep out of sight, of course, and as for friends, well, I don't know of any who would be glad to see me. They all shook me when the smash came. There was one fellow who might have stood by me. I didn't know him very well, but he would not have run like the others. It so happened he ducked a little while ahead of my trouble, and, if I could find him now, I think he would understand and help me, because he has been in wrong himself."

Dickson nodded.

"Who was he?"

"A fellow by the name of King," said Carter slowly. "He was a good bit older than me and kind of quiet—but a good scout. We were going into a business deal together when his trouble hit him and knocked it out. He had an option on a large Government contract."

Dickson sat very still, and Carter knew that his eyes were fairly boring through and through him. He was playing his highest card. Did Dickson suspect it even now?

"King," Dickson reapeated quietly. "How long ago was this, Jones?"

"Oh, around May, just before they jumped me. Why? Do you know him?"

Dickson paid no attention to the question.

"What was his trouble?" he demanded. "What made him skip and leave you?"

Carter shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't know. He was all right one day—everything looked good; then he phoned me and said he had bad news and was leaving town in a hurry. That's all I know. Before that he had said something strange enough, though. He had never told me where he lived, and at one time he apologized for it. He said that there was some one who had it in for him and he was lying low. I imagined afterward that he might have been in bad with the police."

Dickson laughed suddenly.

"Jones, your life and mine are evidently intended to overlap all along the line. This man 'King' is the one who framed you up with the department by stealing the currency plates and making exact duplicates of them, then placing them in your trunk to make it appear that you were the thief. And you paid the penalty which he had all arranged before he left. He had no intention of taking a Government contract. That was simply his scheme to use you as a tool by promising to take you in as a partner on the supposed deal.

"I know, you see, because I have a score of my own to settle with him, a rather bigger bill than yours. We are both after the same man. We both want him for the same reason. We are both in the same scrape with the law. It's a risk to stick together, but I've a notion it would be worse to be separated. We have had our luck by being thrown together; are you game to stick and take the chances? I can prove to you that King is your man, and I can guarantee you a chance to square accounts with him when I've finished, and I'll be needing help, too."

Carter showed amazement.

"You don't mean that you know something about him?"

Dickson's hands closed, and his eyes narrowed to pin-points under the shaggy brows.

" 'King' was the name Thomas A. Black was using here last May. I have never been out of touch with him since I was jobbed. He hasn't moved without my knowing it. I have a score to settle with him that no one else can settle. I know where to find him, and I'm going to find him within a week—want to help?"

Carter did not need to pretend now.

"Do I?" he said. "Try me."

They shook hands on it. But Dickson would not reveal a single detail of his plan,

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nor would he tell how, while he had been penned in a cell at Atlanta Prison, he had been able to keep his enemy continually under observation. Carter thought he could guess—Clara Dickson had looked after that.

But the real mystery lay elsewhere. At any time within the past eight years Dickson could have turned Black over to the vengeance of the law. Why hadn't he? Why had he chosen to wait? It could only mean, thought Carter, that he intended to demand a higher price than prison for Black. He meant to kill him.

There was more than one reason why he must not be allowed to do that. In the first place, the law had its own score to settle with Black, and the law's claim came first. In the second place, private justice is still a crime in the eye of the law, and, for wiping out his score with his enemy, it would be Carter's duty to send him back to Atlanta Prison facing something vastly worse than another year or two in a cell. And there was the tall, clear-eyed girl who would suffer and hate. It was the last reason that impressed Carter most.

They spent the next day in the old house, untroubled by visitors, Carter perfectly aware that Jim Savage and three or four of his best men were keeping a careful watch on Clara Dickson, ably assisted by Mrs. Laughlin, the best woman operative in the Service.

It did not surprize them in the least that the girl made no effort to communicate with her father.

Carter was also well aware that West and Taylor were somewhere within eyeshot of his present refuge. The chief trusted the Bloodhound pretty far, but he was leaving nothing whatever to chance, and this additional surveillance had been part of the bargain. He would have preferred to play a lone hand, for he feared that Dickson was clever enough to see or guess that he was being watched, and the least suspicion would be enough to defeat the whole plan.

Dickson would rather submit to recapture than risk putting his enemy into the hands of the Secret Service. If he once suspected he was being given a modified liberty merely to lead the Secret Service pack to the hidden fox, he was perfectly capable of walking out boldly and surrendering.

AFTER dark they risked going out and followed the road to a block of stores near town, where they bought papers and food. Back in their refuge, they read the brief accounts of the escape, Dickson with amusement and Carter with approval. The story the warden had given the reporters was admirably calculated to reassure Dickson. It laid the blame entirely on the prisoner, Jones, who was responsible for having made the plan and implicated Dickson, whose record heretofore had been excellent.

The account foretold a speedy capture and closed with a résumé of the crimes for which both men had been imprisoned, laying particular stress on those of Dickson which involved the famous Thomas A. Black. One reporter even hazarded a guess that Black had helped in the escape, at which Dickson laughed aloud.

"He is shaking in his shoes right now," he said grimly. "He better, too, when I get my hands on him."

"What's the good of rubbing out a guy like that," objected Carter. "If you turn him over to the Secret Service, the Government would give him at least a thousand years on his own confessions. If you bump him off, he is out of reach for keeps and there is a nice little chair for ours. I'm game to go after him, all right, but I don't want any killing, or I quit right here—see?"

Dickson shrugged.

"There won't be any killing, Jones, but I must have my chance at him with my hands. You can't understand, Jones; it is something outside of the job he framed on me. Aren't you wise yet about that? He made that play simply to get me put away. It looked as if I had been in on the job with him, and his letter to the Secret Service got me nabbed. He had me framed as hard and fast as he had you. Why? Because he knew that I was going to get him mighty soon if he didn't. He had plenty of reasons to know I was closing in on him and plenty of reasons to be afraid of what would happen when I did."

"But you know where he is now; you have known right along, I take it. I don't see why you haven't turned him up long ago," said Carter.

"I'll tell you. It is because prison is too safe a place. It is hard enough to get him when he is outside. I wouldn't have a

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chance if he were inside, and I've got to have him where I can handle him my own way, give him my own third degree; half an hour ought to do it. I have had plenty of time to figure out ways and means back there. I'm not going to kill him, unless he dies of fright, but I'm going to let him smell brimstone mighty close, Jones. I shall have to, Jones; you don't understand what is between us."

"I can make a fair guess now," Carter said sobering. "It sounds to me like a case of a girl. That is it, isn't it?"

"It's near enough; let it go at that. Don't speak of it again."

Carter was amazed at the change in the other man. Normally Dickson conveyed an impression of something tense and deadly; there was a hint of a crouching panther in the man's repressed strength and the smoldering ferocity of his eyes. Now stark hatred fairly radiated from him; he seemed to glow with the heat of it as iron reddens in the flame. His hands tightened; his lips drew away from clenched teeth; the muscles of his jaws stood out under the bleached skin.

It was only for an instant, and then Dickson was himself again, smiling, poised, master of his emotions; but the instant had been enough. Whatever debt lay between this man and Thomas A. Black was something to be paid in sweating agony and not in quick, easy death.

"All right, but no killing," exclaimed Carter. "I'd like to rub him out myself, if he is the man who handed me my troubles, but I don't intend to take any chances on the chair, even for that."

"You fool, Jones, I'd risk my neck a hundred times to keep life in him. I want him to live to be a hundred. Even that wouldn't pay back, but it would be something. Kill Black? I'd kill another man to keep him alive."

There was no room for doubt. Carter's anxiety was set at rest. Dickson would lead him to Thomas A. Black as a bloodhound follows the scent, and like the bloodhound he would not kill his quarry when he found it but suffer it to be taken from him alive. The plan would work; the day would come after all when Carter would make his boast good by bringing in the man who had made the Secret Service look silly for years.

"I would just as soon not be in his shoes," he said quietly. "It looks to me as if he had a bad time ahead of him, if you really know where to find him. Where is he?"

Carter eagerly awaited Dickson's reply.

"I don't know now."

"Then how are you going to find him? We can't either of us do much running around."

"We don't have to. I'll know when the time comes. Don't worry. This is my little job, Jones; it is all arranged."

The Bloodhound found a chance to scribble a condensed report of progress, and, when he and Dickson went out in search of news and food on the third evening of their escape it was easy enough to slip it into the ready hand of Sam West, who brushed against him as he stood at the counter in the grocery. There was another placed in his hand and returned to his pocket.

Later, when he was sure he was not observed, he read and burned it. The chief urged him to get action as soon as possible. The papers were making trouble over the escape at the prison, and the warden was beginning to lose his nerve and insist on the return of his borrowed prisoner. The prison commission was inclined to agree with him, and, unless something happened soon, the chief would be obliged to make the pinch and drop the scheme. It ended with an earnest caution against allowing Dickson to escape, at which Carter could not help smiling. Dickson did not want to get away from him; he quite evidently needed help in his plan to deal with Black.

But he meditated on the wisdom of urging speed and would have broached the topic next morning to Dickson if the latter had not anticipated him by announcing that the time had come to move.

"We ought to have the tip by this time," he said. "We will go and see, anyway."

Carter objected.

"In daylight? Together?"

He was perfectly willing that Dickson should go alone. He couldn't get away from the number of Secret Service operatives patiently watching on the outside, and he might give them a clearer clue if he fancied himself unobserved even by his supposed accomplice.

"We will have to chance it. It is not far, anyway, and we had better stick together. If things are right, we shall not be coming back here again. Come on."

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THEY went out boldly and descended the slope toward the edge of the city's fringe of flat buildings. At the branch post-office Dickson stopped and asked for mail addressed to James Franklin. A single letter was handed him, and he opened it so eagerly that Carter unconsciously drew nearer. Dickson thrust the note into his pocket.

"All right," he said briefly. "We have hit the trail, Jones. I might have guessed it, anyway. It is exactly where he would go—the last place a man would look for him. I'll give you one chance to guess where he is."

"How would I know," Carter asked. "If you have the dope, let's go. I don't like this daylight stuff a little bit."

Dickson laughed.

"You don't care where we go so long as we start, eh? Then come on; we must find a garage somewhere and get a car. It's a long walk to Milford, and the trolley-cars would not be safe."

"Milford?" Carter stared, genuinely surprized. "Go back there?"

"When they are busy finding us in New Orleans or San Francisco, they will never think that we have remained this close to prison. It is not such a bad stunt at that. Anyway, it is where we are going, because our man has doped it out that is one place where we won't go. Come on; I should not wonder if it were the best thing we could do on our own account."

Carter protested but gave away at last. It was reasonable enough for him to submit to Dickson, since the older man had money and he had none. Under Dickson's protection he had a chance of getting clear. On his own feet, penniless and friendless, it would only be a few days until he was caught; so Dickson must have reasoned at least, for he took pains to reassure Carter, as they rolled swiftly over the macadam road which brought them south on their flight, and seemed to see nothing suspicious in his ally's willingness to go back into the very shadow of the prison rather than part company.

"I have all the dope on him, Jones. He is going by the name of 'Kane,' and he is made up to look like a sort of retired minister or teacher, clean-shaven and stooped and his hair gray again. He's a wizard at disguising himself. I don't know right now what he really looks like. When I knew him, he was a square-shouldered, middle-aged fellow with an easy, hearty way of talking, and there wasn't so much as a streak of gray in his hair.

"But, when I caught up with him before he framed me, he was a whiskery old wreck with hair and beard almost white and a fine case of nerves in his wrists. Right now he has a new stunt, according to the note that tipped me off. He has painted a birthmark on his left cheek. That's really clever because it makes it hard to get any description of him if we should happen to strike the trail, except just that mark. When he washes it off, he is a different man, even if he doesn't change another thing.

"That's exactly like Black. He's left so many contradictory descriptions behind him that I doubt whether the Secret Service could get him identified if they caught him. He's clever; no crook ever touched him for that. But I'll know him, all right."

His jaws closed, and his hands tightened.

"How?" demanded Carter.

"Eyes," said Dickson briefly. "He can't change them, and there isn't another pair like them on earth. I'll know him when I find him."

Carter filed that fact away in his mind for future reference. It had not occurred to him that the catching of Black was only the first step in the task he had set for himself—and by no means the hardest one. He saw now that the man's trick of altering his appearance radically in each of his manifestations was going to complicate things terribly.

The people who had seen and known him in Chicago would certainly disagree as to his identification with those who had been defrauded by him in New Orleans. There were no photographs or measurements by which to establish mathematically that he was the man Carter wanted. Dickson might prove invaluable when it came to convicting the fellow if, as he claimed, he would know him regardless of disguise.

Under Dickson's instructions they drove slowly as the evening glow of approaching night closed about them. This pleased Carter because he could be quite sure that West, at least, was keeping the trail and would be able to furnish reenforcements in case of need. Several times, as they turned corners, he caught glimpses of another car which seemed to be following them.

It was dark when they reached Milford, and they slipped through the ill-lighted

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streets without attracting any more attention than an ordinary car. Dickson guided the driver with curt instructions until they had reached a certain residence district on the far side of the town. Here they slowly crept along the curb until they found the house Dickson was looking for.

Carter saw that the building was a three-story frame structure with the street floor housing a shop of some kind, the windows of which were darkened by lowered shades. The two upper stories evidently were designed for living-apartments, and a doorway led up to them from beside the store.

Dickson stopped to glance at the name-plates and straightened with a barely audible sound of satisfaction, a quick expulsion of his breath which startled Carter by its ferocity. He saw the man's eyes had narrowed and his face had frozen into a mask of grim hatred.

"We've got him. Here's the program. You help here. Ring the lower bell, and, when they let you in, I'll follow. Get inside the door up-stairs and keep them busy while I go on up. Say you are looking for a friend you understand boards there. If they suggest that it must be up-stairs, you can come on up and help if you like. But remember—you are not to interfere whatever happens. This is my job. You'll stand by and say nothing till I've got what I want—see?"

Carter thought quickly. There was only one way out of the building, and he would be on guard along that way; so there was no chance of escape. If he refused to fall in with the plan, he might lose his chance even now by exciting Dickson's suspicions. And he depended on Dickson to identify his man. He could not afford to argue; besides, it was perfectly safe.

"You'll leave him for me, though," he said temporizing. "No bumping him off before I've had my turn."

"No fear. I told you I'd risk my neck to keep him alive, didn't I? That goes. Come on; we might as well go up. There is a light in his rooms; he's there. Quickly now. And remember—give me a chance to slip by you."

MR. CARTER rang the bell, and presently the latch clicked, and they found themselves in a narrow hall, nearly dark, where steep stairs led away and up toward the rear. Carter went first, Dickson at his heels. He found a gruff man confronting him as he stepped abruptly past him into a stuffy, smoke-filled living-room, and after a hostile stare the other turned from the door.

"What do you want?" he demanded. "You got your nerve with you, all right."

Carter had seen the face somewhere, but it did not identify itself to him at once. His mind was fixed on the upper floor and the risk he was running in letting Dickson out of his sight before help arrived.

He lifted his brows.

"I'm looking for my friend, Kane," he replied. "I understand he lives here."

The eyes narrowed, and the face darkened.

"He lives up-stairs," said the unpleasant voice. "What do you want to see him about, huh?"

Carter stared.

"What's that to you?" he demanded sweetly. "Sorry to bother you, but——"

"Don't mention it, I'm glad you came in. I have been hoping to get a look at you for two or three days, Number 5786—don't move at all!"

A heavy gun appeared miraculously from the fellow's hip and pointed at Carter's head. Instinctively his hands rose. The other laughed.

"Nerve—you got all there is; break out of prison and walk bang into a keeper's house two days later. This is mighty friendly of you, Number 5876. I'll remember it while you're doing your little bit. 'Money from home.'"

Carter caught his breath.

"Man, I'm Robert Carter of the Secret Service. I was in there doing a pigeon stunt, and you are balling it up. I've got Dickson here after Black, who is here living under the name of Kane. Put away that cannon and help. I'm single-handed and you'll make the odds even. Hop now; Dickson is up-stairs now with Black."

"Don't let them down; keep 'em like they are." A harsh chuckle greeted his eager demands. "Maybe you got Dickson along, but he'll wait. I'll just get the tongs on you before we go ahead."

And while Carter raged helplessly, handcuffs snapped on his wrists and his arms were manacled behind him, leaving him utterly helpless. He could do nothing now. Too late he recognized the man as one of the prison-keepers, a heavy-handed brute detested even by his fellow employees.

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He had bungled the business hideously; it would be sheer, blind luck if both Black and Dickson did not slip out of his fingers.

McDaniel chuckled as he raged and begged.

"Don't worry, 5876. If you've got your pal up-stairs, he'll come back, too. But I always play the sure thing first. I got you, anyway."

There was a sound of hurrying footsteps overhead, a muffled sound of voices and then one clear, distinct speech in Dickson's crisp voice.

"I've got you, Black; I've got you, you murderer."

McDaniel stiffened, listening.

"Man, get them; get them quick. Never mind me. It's Tom Black and Dickson, and we will lose them both in another second if you fool around down here."

The man's face drew into a dubious scowl. He hesitated, one hand clutching Carter's helpless arm.

"You may be handing it to me straight," he conceded, "but I ain't taking any chances. They got to come down here to make a getaway, and I'll just stand in the door and gather them in. But first I'll fix you so you don't queer the play, brother."

He whipped out a handkerchief and knotted it cruelly between Carter's teeth, gagging him so that he could barely breathe. Then with a sudden lurch he carried his prisoner across the room to a closet, flung him in and locked the door.

Carter kicked frantically at the panels, but to no avail. He stopped after a minute to strain his ears for some sound from overhead, but none came. He heard McDaniel telephoning in a lowered tone and realized with little comfort that the man was right, according to his own light. He was playing it safe by making sure of the prisoner he already had and was calling for help to retake those still at large.

He saw that by creating a disturbance now he would only lessen the chance of capturing Black. It was humiliating to be found, trussed and helpless, while a stupid brute like McDaniel made the arrest on which he had set his heart, but the important thing was that the arrest should be made. He must grin and bear the ridicule that would certainly descend upon him when the story reached headquarters, comforted by the knowledge that it had been his plan which led to the capture.

The moments dragged slowly before there was a sound of steps and lowered voices, and the key clicked again in the door of his makeshift cell. Rough hands dragged him into the light, and triumphant, hostile faces grinned at him. He looked in vain for West and Taylor. Where were they? Why didn't they come and set him right with these Milford police?

"Did you get them? Have you got Black?" He could not control his eagerness.

"Oh, yes, we got Black, all right, all right. And we got you, too," said the man who held him. "The little old chair for you, Jones, and you got it comin' at that. Talk about cold nerve, bumping off a guy right here in Milford an'——"

"Bump—what do you mean? Who's killed? Dickson?"

A chuckle answered him.

"You poor simp. Dickson slipped it over on you, all right. He's made his getaway and left you holding the bag and lookin' foolish. You asked for it and you got it."

A trample of feet sounded on the stairs, and, to Carter's vast relief, West and Taylor tumbled into the room. And behind them, to his great discomfiture and delight at once, appeared the chief himself. There was an uproar of explanations before the handcuffs were unlocked and he was set free to explain as best he could the gigantic blunder which had sent all plans astray. But first he wanted light on the newer mystery of a murder. McDaniel, sullen and defiant under the sudden enlightenment, furnished by the newcomers, told the story abruptly.

"He bumped off Black and made his getaway by the window. There's a rope there. I was playing safe."

Black—Dickson killed Black. The room before Carter's eyes rocked as the words thudded into his brain.

The chief turned to him grimly.

"Well, Carter," he said slowly, "it looks as if you'd managed to make a pretty ghastly mess of the whole job, doesn't it?"

"Let me get up there, quick."

Carter pressed to the door. It was no time for recriminations now. There was a track to follow, a fresh blood-scent calling to him. No longer Black, but Dickson who had deliberately tricked him into playing accessory before the fact to premeditated murder; who had cold-bloodedly plotted to leave him behind in the hands of the police, facing certain death in the chair for a crime

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in which he had no part. Dickson, who had used and betrayed him.

"Let me up there," he cried again.

THEY followed him up the narrow stairs. In a small, ill-furnished bedroom of the third-story apartment a man's body lay on the floor, a dark blot of red slowly spreading over the cheap rug from a stab-wound in the left breast, death instantly obvious in every line of the relaxed limbs, the ash-gray of the blanched face.

Thomas Black deserved to die, Carter knew. The law would presently have taken his life in payment for his sins; he was a forfeited murderer himself, and yet, as he lay there beyond the reach of human justice, with the blotted record of his life ended by the red underscoring of death, Carter had a curious throb of pity for him. He looked pathetically harmless, a shrunken, frail, gray man, feeble and broken, incapable of harming any enemy by violence.

"Don't look very dangerous, does he?" West bent over the body. "You wouldn't think he was lightning on the knife-play, would you?"

McDaniel growled from the doorway.

"How do you know it is Black?" he demanded defensively. "The old lad looked all right to me. I spoke to him four or five times while he was movin' in, and he acted like a simple old stiff. All you got is the say-so of the guy who bumped him off."

"That's right." The chief touched Carter's arm. "How do you know this is Black, Carter? It might be anybody. There's no banking on Dickson, anyway; he's proved that much."

"Searched him?"

Carter glanced about him. There was a shaking of heads.

"Got to wait for the coroner," explained one of the local police; "he will be here any minute now."

Carter was already busy with the pockets of the rusty black coat. They held nothing of interest, a worn penknife, a few small coins, a small bunch of keys. He examined the labels in the pockets of coat and trousers but found no hint; the clothes had been bought ready-made. He opened the vest and explored the inner pocket with no better result. But, as his hand brushed the faded shirt, something crackled below the fabric. He thrust his hand under the garment and drew out an envelope, one end of it red and wet with the man's blood.

The others crowded around while he opened it and read:

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:—

This is to certify that I am the man known as Thomas A. Black. I hereby confess that I am guilty of many crimes against the Government, some of them committed for my amusement. I have already confessed in writing to the chief of the Secret Service. I am preparing this letter to serve as an aid to the police in the event of my death.

I am living in danger of my life at the hands of an escaped convict known as George Dickson, with whom, as established at the trial, I was associated in defrauding the Government nine years ago; who has contrived ever since to keep track of me, as evidenced by threatening letters which will be found somewhere in this room unless he finds and destroys them after killing me.

I have sought to protect myself as far as possible by coming to Milford and securing rooms close to the residence of a prison-keeper in the hope that Dickson will not venture here, but I am well aware that he is a desperate man and fearless, and he has reasons to desire my death more than his own life. I have no malice against Dickson, whose hatred is well deserved. I sign this statement with the name under which I have committed most of my crimes, but which is not my proper one.

THOMAS A. BLACK.

"It's his writing, all right," whispered the chief hoarsely. "The same fist he used on the other letters. I'd know it anywhere. This makes it open and shut. Carter, you've certainly handled it nicely—I don't think. This lets you out. You're discharged. I've a good mind to turn you over to the police as an accessory. It would serve you right."

Carter rose, laying the letter on the table. This was injustice; he may have deserved a reprimand, perhaps, but to be flung out of the Service in disgrace was unfair. It would discredit him with every department in the Government, and the black mark on his record would hurt him always. He turned quickly.

"Give me a chance to get Dickson, sir. I owe him that, and I'll get him."

"You were going to get Black, too," said the chief. "I guess we'll worry along without you after this, Carter. I don't like your methods. That'll be all for you."

Carter saw that it was futile to persist. He was to blame not only for Dickson's escape but for the murder of Black as well. A scapegoat was always needed in such a fiasco as this, and he offered a broad target for attack, he realized. He couldn't blame the chief for being angry, for after all, if he

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had played a more careful game, he couldn't have lost as hopelessly as this. He deserved his bad luck.

"All right, sir."

He threw back his head and squared his shoulders and walked out, followed by the sardonic grunts from the local police and impressed glances from his late mates.

ALTHOUGH officially relieved from duty and no longer entitled to pursue and arrest, habit led him around the rear of the building, where, standing in a litter of packing-cases, he could look up at the lighted window beyond which the dead man lay and whence the thin line of dangling rope still revealed the avenue by which the slayer had escaped. Carter merely glanced about him at the shadowy yards of adjacent houses.

He wasted no time in useless search for traces here. Dickson could have gotten away by any one of a dozen passages to near-by streets, and he had plenty of time to make good his escape by now. Carter's mind automatically turned to the problem of picking up that trail; officially or otherwise, he meant to follow Dickson and bring him back.

His liking for the man had utterly vanished from the instant when he realized how deliberately he had been betrayed; left to face the chair for a crime in which he had not the least part. Potentially, at least, Dickson was his murderer as well as Black's. Carter's hands tightened at that thought.

He saw the surest way to find Dickson, even as he shrunk from using it. Clara, of course. If she had not been warned of her father's deadly intentions, she might not yet have tried to escape. In that case her arrest would be certain and swift if Warren were assigned to the case, as Carter felt sure he would be. Warren believed in getting material witnesses and possible accomplices under lock and key as quickly as possible. And he had his own way of persuading them to talk.

Carter did not like the idea of Clara Dickson facing these methods, and, if her father were to be overtaken, the one chance of accomplishing it was to let the girl imagine herself unobserved; give her every possible opportunity to join him.

It was too late to warn her, unless she had already left the hotel where she had taken up her residence. If she had done that, there was just a bare chance that he could keep her from a cell and Warren's third degree methods, even now.

He came back to the street again, confronted by the dismaying realization that his pockets were empty. Dickson had held the purse for them both, and Carter had not ventured to provide himself with money lest he arouse the other's suspicions. Now, unless he went up-stairs and borrowed from his late friends, he could not even pay for a telephone message. He laughed at the absurdity of it. He was helpless. He couldn't move. He couldn't communicate with Dickson's daughter. He couldn't even get back to the city unless he walked.

"Hey, there, how much longer do I wait for my coin?" the driver of the car which had brought him and Dickson to Milford called out. "What's all the row about. Where do I come in?"

Carter laid glad hands on him.

"I was looking for you. We'll duck back to town right now. Put her on high all the way, and there is an extra ten in it for you if we get there inside thirty minutes. Open her right up wide and shoot."

In another minute they were scudding back to the city. Ten dollars evidently looked very big to the driver. Carter never forgot that ride through the night. It was barely thirty minutes when the car drew up to the hotel where he first stopped on his arrival in Atlanta. He jumped out and ran into it, where he cashed a check which amply provided him with ready funds. He had his baggage taken from storage and sent to his room. After freshening up a bit, he called a taxi and went directly to the old-fashioned hotel where he knew Clara Dickson was stopping.

He carefully avoided the front entrance by slipping along the alley leading to the ash hoist, the one unguarded avenue of entrance. The iron cover of the ash-pit was lowered but not fastened, and he lifted it and dropped lightly to the dusty litter a few feet below, emerging into the stifling swelter of the boiler room, where half-clad firemen stared at him in astonishment and blocked his way. He showed his badge, which he had hastily dug from his baggage on returning to his own hotel.

The men stared and drew aside without speaking, while Carter slipped by, mounting metal stairs past a whirling dynamo, and

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reached the service entrance to the dining-room. Here again he was stopped, this time by a checker, who eyed him curiously when he displayed his badge, and pointed silently in response to his question. He found the service stairs and climbed them, thanking his stars that Taylor happened to be looking the other way as he passed the open door at the foot where the familiar form was on guard.

He found room Number 365 without incident and, his pulses throbbing, tapped lightly on the panels. There was a pause and then a low-voiced question.

"It's me, Tom Jones," he said softly. "Hurry; there's no time to lose."

Steps sounded; and the door opened. The girl's eyes met his questioningly, without friendliness. She seemed displeased at his presence.

"What is it?"

"They'll be arresting you any minute," he whispered. "Your father has killed Black and made his getaway. I was there and heard them say something about you. They had me, but I broke loose and beat it down here to tip you off. There's a Secret Service man at every door down-stairs, but I know a way out. Hurry."

Carter spoke intentionally in the slip-shod way of the underworld, knowing that his natural speech would be so far out of character as to stir her suspicion. She hesitated, her eyes wide open, her cheeks very pale.

"You're sure he killed him?"

"Sure. I was right there when he did it. You'd better hustle if you don't want to be caught. There's not a second to lose."

She did not move. Her eyes regarded him deliberately, a faint hint of aversion in their level, cold scrutiny.

"Did he send any word? Did he tell you to come to me?"

Carter snatched at the opening.

"Of course; how could I have found you if he hadn't? He said to come straight to you if we were separated, and you would know how to fix it up so we would get together all right when it was safe. I didn't get a chance to talk to him after the killing, but I made straight for here when I broke loose. I spotted the Secret Service men down-stairs. The place is crawling with them. Come on, Miss Dickson."

She turned, still deliberately, took up a jacket and hat and drew a small hand-bag from the dresser drawer. On tenter-hooks for fear lest Warren's orders should spoil his plan even now, Carter motioned for her to make haste. She smiled scornfully.

"There is no hurry. I was prepared for something like this all along. Come this way, please."

She beckoned him into the room. He entered, wondering how she proposed to escape in any such fashion.

She locked the door and switched off the lights. On guard now, he caught her sleeve, vigilant against another evasion. He heard her laugh.

"You need not be afraid. I'll not leave you behind. Very careful now; there is some one down there watching the foot of the ladder, no doubt. We must go quietly."

SHE lifted the shade at the window and raised the sash cautiously, leaning far out to peer down a narrow air well. Carter followed her example. Far below he could see a shadow where a man stood, leaning against the wall. She drew back, smiling.

"I thought so, but we can manage very nicely. I arranged this so, if father came here, we could have a way out, and it is going to be convenient for us."

She knelt and drew a steel frame from under the dresser, a light, strong-jointed affair, which, as Carter stared, she proceeded to expand into a short ladder, each end provided with strong hooks projecting at right-angles. She lifted the thing seemingly without effort and thrust it out of the window until its farther end slipped over the sill of an open window across the shaft. She climbed quickly to the sill and motioned him to follow.

On hands and knees, gripping the sides of the narrow bridge desperately, he obeyed, dropping to the floor at the far end as the girl stepped back. Without a word she lifted the ladder and drew it in.

Even if the man at the foot of the ladder had seen them cross, he could not have prevented them from reaching the opposite side in safety. It would take time to give an alarm; time to find where to look for an exit. No doubt she had planned and arranged for that, too; so the chances for capture would be small.

"He didn't see us; there is no hurry now," she said quietly. "Tell me just what happened, please."

Carter told her the exact truth, realizing

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that the newspaper accounts would contradict any departure from the facts. He described their arrival in Milford, her father's scheme to gain entry to the third-story apartment, his own capture by the keeper and the sounds he had heard as he struggled with McDaniel. Her lip curled a little as he mentioned having been captured, the shout of recognition that he had heard and the subsequent discovery of Black's body and the letter, in Carter's presence. He had to depart here from the exact truth.

"While they were all excited about the letter, I made a dive for the rope and got clean away. The car was still standing where we left it, and we gave them the slip on the road easy enough. I took a chance on coming here after what I heard one of the Secret Service men say about watching you. But I thought I could make it, all right. And I didn't want them to get you if I could help it."

"That was very good of you, Mr. Jones," she said quietly.

Carter did not like her tone or the expression that accompanied it. She seemed to regard him with a repressed dislike that was almost contempt. There was a note of irony in her thanks which puzzled him. Of course, he really hadn't run any risk in coming to warn her. But from her point of view he had hazarded his life to do it, and she ought to be decently grateful, even if there was no foundation for gratitude in actual fact. She reflected a moment.

"You're quite sure father told you to come to me if things went wrong?" she pursued at length. "You couldn't be mistaken about that?"

"He told me to find you here and stay near you till we could meet up somewhere," said Carter doggedly.

He hated lies like this, vital as they were in his trade. The idea of using the girl as a means of tracking down her father already began to sicken him. It was a game, to be sure. When a man hunts a murderer, he can not afford to be particular about the methods he uses or considerate of a murderer's relatives, and yet, as Carter faced Dickson's daughter in the wretched little hotel room, he had already lost his first anger toward the man who had left him to die. He still meant to find Dickson and turn him back to justice, but all the zest had gone out of the idea.

The girl's lips curved again in the mocking smile that puzzled him.

"Then we better be going, I think," she said gently. "Come along. There's no danger for the present at least."

She unlocked the door and slipped quickly into the dimly lighted hall beyond it. Carter followed closely, on guard against a trick. But the girl seemed no more anxious to be rid of his company than he was to leave her. She led him to a dingy stairway, down which they descended, reaching at last a shabby office and lobby on the second floor of the building.

Carter identified the place now. It was a cheap hotel catering to travelers who preferred their pockets to their comforts and saving rent by sacrificing the ground-floor reception-rooms. He would have gone down the main stairway to the street, but the girl touched his arm and led him past the end of a pool-room and down by a stair beyond this. They emerged around a corner nearly a block away from their start.

"Rather convenient, isn't it?" she said quietly. "I wonder if they will be able to follow this trail so far. Do you think they could?"

"I don't know."

Carter was thinking that, if he had been following the trail instead of making it, he certainly would not have failed to investigate the room across from the air well. But he was discharged. Her next words broke in on his resentment with a sharp shock of surprize.

"If they put the Bloodhound on it, he would follow sure enough," she said.

Carter managed to control his face.

"I hope they don't," he answered.

"By all that I hear of him, he must be clever," she agreed. "I've often wondered why he did not catch Black. It is curious that he shouldn't have done it, don't you think?"

Carter caught himself on the very brink of an explanation.

"We've got to get away, Miss Dickson; this isn't healthy for either of us, even if we did sneak out of that building. Where are we going?"

She smiled faintly.

"You'll see. But you are right about hurrying. There is a man following us now. Don't look; I saw him quite distinctly in that window we just passed.

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He is one of the men who have been watching me since the escape. I'm quite sure about him. That is unfortunate, isn't it, after getting away so nicely?"

CARTER risked a swift glance over his shoulder. She was right. He recognized West, one of the men of the Service, slipping along behind them so clumsily that Carter had a momentary impulse to stop and give him a much needed lesson in the art of shadowing. Evidently he was still unaware of Carter's downfall. It would be possible to slip away from him if Carter could manage a moment out of hearing of the girl. A word to West would be enough.

"How are you going to make a getaway?" he asked quickly. "What did you have framed up?"

She shrugged her shoulders.

"I meant to get away in a car that I have been keeping just for this emergency, but, if he is following, that is quite out of the question. We shall have to try and lose him on a trolley, I suppose."

Carter thought quickly. Here was a chance to banish any lingering doubts she might have of him, if he managed carefully.

"It's you he's after. We'll beat him by separating. You walk ahead alone, and I'll drop back. I'll bid you good night at the next corner and turn down the side street. You go straight on, and I will come up behind him and fix it so he won't bother us much."

She flashed a quick glance at him.

"You don't mean——"

Carter smiled.

"Oh, I won't hurt him much; just a little tap on the bean. He'll be all right again in a few minutes. Pick out a dark corner to lead him into if you can. I won't hurt him much, honest."

She hesitated, then, smiling faintly, nodded assent. At the corner they shook hands, and Carter lifted his hat and strode down the side street, jerking his head for West to follow the girl. He saw him catch the signal and grinned as the youngster actually quickened his step in pursuit of the girl. He gave him a lead of perhaps ten strides before he again took up the trail.

At the first corner the girl turned. He saw that she knew better than glance behind her, and he saw with approval that she was carrying out his suggestion of leading the unwary West into a suitable place to stop him. She had started diagonally across the street toward the mouth of one of the narrow alleys which run between the cotton warehouses; as Carter described it mentally, it was a beautiful spot for murder. He chuckled as he quickened his own step behind West.

The girl slipped into the alley, West hotly in pursuit and only a few steps behind her now. The veriest simpleton in crookdom would have known long ago that he was being followed, and Carter made a mental note to look up West when this was over and earnestly advise him to go into some other profession—the advertising business, perhaps, in which it is profitable to attract attention.

Carter bounded forward as West disappeared into the darkness, found him and flung himself bodily on the youngster's shoulders. He could distinguish the girl's dim figure as she walked rapidly ahead.

"It's Carter," he said in West's ear as he seized his arms. "You've made a mess of it. Pretend to let me knock you out. I'm trying on the inside and this will make me solid with the girl."

West whispered a ready assent and struggled bravely. Carter threw him and landed on top of him, while West gave an excellent imitation of a man who had been knocked out. Then Carter sprang to his feet to follow the girl, for it was undeniably risky to let her get far away from him; but the advantage of clinching his hold on her confidence outweighed it.

Another second and he would have been with her, but luck played against him. A ponderous hand crashed down on his shoulder, and a cannon-like gun menaced him.

"Just in time, eh?" a heavy voice chuckled in his ear. "Rough stuff to be pulling on my beat, with me watching the whole play. The skirt teases him in here, and you jump him."

West struggled to get up, his voice high and shrill.

"It's all——"

"Shut up, you fool; she is listening. It's got to be played out as it goes." He felt the gun draw back from his ribs as the policeman yielded to the shock of hearing the supposed victim speak. "Apologize for me later, West; it's got to be done."

This time there was no make-believe about the right-hand crash that half lifted

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the big cop from his broad, flat feet—nor about the businesslike lunge with the shoulder which upset him over the prostrate form of West. The gun went off with a roar that echoed deafeningly in the narrow alley, but the bullet sang harmlessly in the air as Carter sped after the girl.

He ran into a lumber-yard, where he found her waiting. The warmth in her tone sent a pang through him; she was trusting him, thanking him, even beginning to like him, and he was tricking her into leading him to her father. He realized suddenly that, when he laid hands on George Dickson, it would mean a short journey to a shameful death, and his daughter would have been the means of sending him to it. For the first time in his life the Bloodhound hated his profession.

"Now where to?" asked Carter.

"We must go to a garage on Decatur Street where I have a little car, and we can make Albany by morning easily. We can get the Transcontinental there. It's a risk to take, but we will have to face that. Everything is a risk, for that matter."

Carter hesitated.

"I think it is a mistake to try and get away like that," he said slowly, forgetting for the moment that it mattered not to him whither or how far the trail might lead and thinking only of the actual problem of escape. "They'll be banking on us doing exactly that, watching trains and boats very carefully. The people who get caught are the ones who run hardest. The wise ones lay low and wait till the watch has relaxed."

She shot a quick glance at him.

"There is something in that, Mr. Jones," she said. "I'm afraid that you have had experience. But this isn't an ordinary case, you see. We are not running away from the Secret Service; we are trying to catch up with father, and he will travel pretty fast until he is safely at our rendezvous. And he won't stop there long, either. Besides, he can't get word to me until I am there; so we must take our risks and make the best of it."

Carter saw that his shrewdness had somehow lowered him in the girl's opinion. Until now, thanks to Dickson's belief in his innocence of the crime he himself had invented to cover his presence at the prison, she had treated him with certain aloof friendliness; allowed him to see that she considered him almost an equal! Now it was as if a barrier had risen between them. She took him for a criminal. He tried to correct the blunder he had caused.

"I haven't had any experience, Miss Dickson, but I could reason it out easily enough that most fugitives run and the police system must be based on the majority. But, as you say, we are trying to find your father, and that alters the case."

SHE made no answer. They came to a small garage where the night force evidently knew her, and a small car was backed out of its place and stocked with gas and oil. She spoke curtly to the man in charge.

"Send over to Albany for the car some time tomorrow. I'll leave it at Smith's garage as usual."

He had evidently taken such orders from her before, for he merely nodded and turned away.

Carter climbed into the car beside her, and they moved out into the darkness. She drove well, he had early reason to believe, although she ran at a speed higher than he enjoyed over poor roads and at night. The car kept her occupied so that conversation was impossible, and he considered matters.

The Transcontinental, eh? That meant a fairly long jump at the least of it, for the Limited did not stop after leaving Albany, where it changed engines, until it had covered some four hundred miles. It occurred to him suddenly that the money in his pocket would not carry him very far on such a journey, and he wondered whether Clara Dickson would pay his expenses as well as her own.

He saw that her attitude on the question might cast some light on her actual state of mind toward his society. If she had wanted to leave him behind, she had had plenty of chance at the lumber-yard, to be sure, but her delay there might easily have been only the natural impulse of fair-play. He was apparently fighting her battle at some risk to himself. It might have been against her principle not to wait for him, but, if she had to buy two tickets now, she would have every chance to be rid of him after reaching Albany, and her conscience need not reproach her for deserting him.

From her point of view, too, his society multiplied the risk. Together they were far more likely to be caught than if they

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traveled separately. He wondered what she would do.

They reached Albany after an all-night run and after she had deliberately spent an hour driving around the elbow of the small city and entering it from the opposite direction. They left the car at a garage, breakfasted together, and, as Carter paid the check, the cautious eye of the girl was on him as he exposed the thin roll of bills which constituted his remaining funds. She came right to the point.

"You haven't enough money, have you? That isn't safe; we might be separated. I have plenty, and you had better take enough to be sure of following me if we should have to take different routes. Here."

She opened her bag and permitted him to catch a glimpse of a thick roll of bills.

"Here is almost one thousand dollars," she said, offering them to him. "You need not mind taking it, we are pretty well off, father and I. Listen carefully now.

"If we are separated for any reason, get to Los Angeles as quickly as you can. On your arrival there, call for mail at general delivery and, if there is none, take the trolley-car for San Pedro and get a room at the Pacific Hotel. It is rather an unpleasant place, but it's safe. Wait there for me to find you."

He nodded, taking the money with just the natural reluctance which the fictitious circumstances seemed to require.

"The Pacific," he repeated. "I'll remember."

He yielded to a sudden temptation to test her even further. If this was merely a ruse to throw him off the track, she would snatch at a chance to separate on his initiative.

"Wouldn't it be better to travel separately, anyway? We are taking a long chance as it is, and we could get there just as easily if we took different routes."

She shook her head quickly.

"We had better chance it and go together," she said firmly. "The trouble with separating is that we couldn't communicate, and it may be necessary to change plans at any moment. I don't think there is very much risk now, in any case. They won't think we have struck so far South in such little time. And remember, too, that the Limited started West early last night before anything had happened. That is in our favor, you see. They will be watching later trains if they even think of watching this line at all. No; we'll stay together for the present, at least."

Carter's resolution weakened still further at this new proof of her sincerity. She supplied him with money; she underwent an obvious increased risk herself in order to make sure of his ultimate escape; she refused a reasonable and easy chance to leave him behind. And he was taking her money and abusing her faith in order to trap the man for whose sake she was imperiling her liberty—if not her life.

To be sure, there had been other cases in which the Bloodhound had unhesitatingly availed himself of such unwariness on the part of his quarry without the faintest bit of remorse. But for some reason, as yet unknown to himself, this case seemed wholly unlike those others. He yielded this point with seeming reluctance as they went out, buying newspapers and seeking the lobby of the hotel in which to read them while waiting for the Limited.

The telegraphed story of the crime was brief, but it gave the salient features accurately enough. Thomas A. Black had been killed at Milford by George Dickson, assisted by Convict Jones, in whose company he had escaped from the prison a short time before. Both men were still at large, but the Secret Service, assisted by the police, expected to capture them within a few hours.

CARTER observed with gratitude that the chief had displayed discretion enough to continue the fiction of his masquerading as Tom Jones. He had been afraid that some incautious comment on his own bungling part in the affair might creep into print and destroy his last chance of redeeming himself. As it was, there was nothing in the paper to weaken the girl's belief in his present character. She paled a little as she read the story.

"I can't understand why he did it," she said half to herself. "It wasn't his plan at all. It spoils everything, in fact, besides the danger of it. Father must have lost his head for a second. I don't understand."

"He lost it, all right," said Carter, shaking his own. "I heard him yell when he saw him, 'I've got you, Black.' Why, he was simply insane from the way he shouted."

He hesitated.

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"What did Black do to your father, besides framing him for the job he did the Government. There was something else, wasn't there? Your father never told me the whole story, but he dropped a hint now and then. A woman, a girl named Mary."

She opened her eyes wide.

"He told you that?" she said with a gasp. "When? How?"

Carter saw that he had reached risky ground. He hedged carefully.

"He didn't exactly tell me. He frequently talked in his sleep in the cell, and he would often dream he was talking to Black and say something about 'paying for Mary.' I couldn't help hearing."

She studied him with cold, appraising eyes.

"He meant my older sister, Mary," she said quietly. "Black ruined her husband, and we think he knows where Mary is. We haven't heard of her since the trouble. It was because of her that he set about ruining father. We were following him up pretty close when he tricked us. We thought we were hunting him, but he was hunting us all the time. We had never seen him, you know, only heard about the affair from Mary's letters and then, after she disappeared, from the papers. He managed things wonderfully to get father safely out of the way for eight or ten years.

"We moved heaven and earth to prove the truth. Father had no reason to engage in fraud against the Government through passing counterfeit money which had been hidden in our house and later found there by the Secret Service. Why, we were rich then. Father was a retired banker, and we are still rich. But Black made it so absolutely clear that father had gained his riches by defrauding the Government for years—and made it all the more contemptible, too, because father didn't need the money. Result, no prison commission would ever entertain an application for a pardon."

Carter shook his head sympathetically. The case began to seem less supportable than ever. To arrest a man for killing the villain who had destroyed his daughter; why, thought the Bloodhound suddenly, in Dickson's place he would have done the same thing and counted it a sacred duty.

"We haven't made it easy for Black, though. He must have had a frightful time of it ever since father's trouble. He hasn't moved without our following him; he hasn't been able to change his name and his looks without our knowing it and letting him know that we knew. He must have spent those nine years in one continuous state of horror. That was my part. I took father's place when they sent him to Atlanta."

Carter's eyes widened.

"You mean that you actually trailed Tom Black? You knew where he was all the time?"

She shook her head.

"I couldn't have told the Secret Service how to take him," she said. "I didn't actually follow him. That was done for me. It was very simple, really.

"You see, he had a servant, a man he took with him wherever he went and who shared more or less in everything he did. This man, Henry Thompson, was our friend as far as he dared to be. It was through him that we found out that Black knew where Mary was, after father had been convicted. He came to me and helped to plan the scheme. You see, Black had evidence that would have convicted Henry Thompson of defrauding the Government; also a murder, I believe. That was the reason he thought he could trust him.

"I think Thompson must have been driven desperate to have killed a man, for I never saw a milder or softer person in my life. But he was in deadly fear of Black, even when he risked coming to me. He hated him, of course, but he feared him even more. And Black kept telling him that, if anything happened to him, Thompson would be caught and convicted. So he wouldn't help me unless I promised that Black should never be turned over to the authorities. The plan was to frighten him into telling us where to find Mary or what had happened to her.

"Wherever Black went, Thompson went, too. And sometimes, before he changed his name, Thompson would come to me, and I'd write a letter addressed to him under the alias he was using, telling him he had two years—or one, whatever the case might be—before he would pay for Mary Birdsell. Thompson would slip the letter into Black's pocket or send it to him through the mails.

"He promised me that, when father got out, we should have our chance to deal with Black, and that was the best he would do. He was very much afraid, so much so

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that I can hardly understand how he dared to help us as much as he did. I hope this won't lead to him being caught. Black's death, I mean. Poor old man, he was dreadfully frightened."

Carter listened eagerly. Some of the minor mysteries were cleared up at last. The girl's part in the affair became instantly a creditable one. She was trying to find some trace of a sister who had dropped out of her life through Tom Black's influence. She was standing by a father wrongfully convicted through Black's machinations. She was not a criminal, but the enemy of the cleverest criminal the country had ever produced.

A new light came to him. He made up his mind in that moment to see her clear—and her father, too, if he could. He had no duty now to perform; the chief had expressly and forcibly relieved him of that. He was free, and, if he chose to stand by two people who were in danger at the hands of the law, he did not violate a trust but faced only the same risk that any other citizen faces when he connives at the escape of offenders.

"I think Black must have convinced your father that your sister was dead," he suggested. "That must have been what maddened him so. That would explain his calling him a murderer, too. Yes, I'm afraid that is the answer. If your sister had been alive, he would have used other methods."

She nodded.

"I've thought all along that Mary was dead. She would have gotten word to us no matter how shamed she felt."

Carter lifted his brows as she checked herself.

"Oh, he took her away from her husband, did he?"

It was brutally blunt, but he had to know. The girl nodded without meeting his eyes.

"Mary was weak and trustful. He used her to ruin poor Jim and then dropped her—or killed her, perhaps. I don't want to talk about it."

Carter persisted.

"But you could have gone to the police with that. You didn't need to track him privately if you thought——"

"But we didn't think, you see." She lifted her shoulders wearily. "We fancied that Mary was with him all the time. We had no reason to think otherwise until he turned the tables on us and Thompson came to see us. After that there was always Thompson to consider. All we could do was to terrify Black by those letters and trust to being able to force him to tell the truth when father was free again."

"I wonder what became of Thompson?" Carter said. "Was he with Black at Milford? Was that how your father traced Black there?"

She nodded.

"He sent word to me night before last, and I forwarded it to father at once. Poor Thompson, I'm afraid he is having a bad time of it now, wherever he has managed to hide himself."

THE Limited was on time, and they were fortunate enough to find accommodations on it. By common consent they separated now and avoided each other during the tiresome journey westward. Carter was convinced now that the girl had no intention of deserting him, and she seemed to be willing enough to trust him not to quit her.

He had no definite plan of action. He meant to see her clear of the trouble that threatened her and to save her father, too, if he could. Meanwhile, it was easy enough to convince himself that her safety required his escort, and, to his own annoying surprize and helplessness, he spent most of the time on that three-day trip building castles in the air and placing to reign therein this wonderful, queenly girl who was gaining an unrelinquished hold on his mind and heart. He wondered if she knew; if she would care; if she even suspected!

Upon arrival at Los Angeles and finding no word there, they made their way immediately to the Pacific Hotel at San Pedro. There, too, they were disappointed, for they found no communication of any sort from Dickson. The girl seemed vaguely puzzled by this but decided after some hesitation that they would go on to Cuba, where, she told Carter, she and her father had planned to live when his imprisonment had ended and his task with Black was done, and where she felt he must have gone since his trouble at Milford.

Under the girl's able management, they soon found themselves aboard the ship making a clean getaway with nothing to fear, except perhaps the wireless. And

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there seemed little reason to be afraid of that, so Carter told her.

"That—and the Bloodhound," she exclaimed. "Somehow, Mr. Jones, I can't help feeling that he is on my trail."

"Nonsense. Don't you worry about that for a moment," he said eagerly. "He's overrated, anyway. Because he's been lucky enough to follow a few stupid crooks around the earth, there is a kind of tradition that he is a human bloodhound. Nothing in it. If he's all you're afraid of, stop worrying."

Still she shook her head.

"I almost hope he is following me. I'd rather have that than think of him tracking father down. Besides, I should like to see and know him. He has always been a figure of interest to me in the newspapers and different accounts I have read of him, and I should like to try him out to satisfy myself just how much of a bloodhound he really is and to see if he isn't after all very, very human, like the rest of us."

She looked at him questioningly with a twinkle in her merry brown eyes.

What could she mean? Was it possible she even suspected his real identity and was at last resorting to a woman's strategy to trick him into telling her everything? No, this could not be; it must not be. He had lived his life thus far without the advent of a woman into it, and he would not yield now. He hated himself for even thinking of it. And, if possible to draw her attention to other things, he said:

"We have four weeks of a pleasant voyage before us. Let's forget the Bloodhound, trouble, prison, everything excepting that we must find your father and know that he is safe, after which I will go my own way and leave you to find again the happiness you so richly deserve."

Her next move startled him. On the impulse of the moment she had grasped his arm and was looking intently into his face. The brown eyes had lost their brightness now; they were sad, beseeching, and there seemed to be a note of tender appeal in her voice when she said:

"Oh, but you won't leave us so soon, will you? I hate to think of you going back alone, while father and I will be so happy. You have grown very closely into our lives, Mr. Jones, and the moment you leave will be a sad one for father and me."

Poor Carter. His heart was throbbing so that he thought surely she must hear those loud beats against his side. What could he do; what could he say—he who had always steered clear of women was in a net at last. But, even so, he was puzzled and troubled at her words, because he did not understand.

Some time later they were standing on deck, their backs to the rail, when suddenly Carter saw her stiffen and her face go white. He glanced in the direction of her gaze just in time to see George Dickson slip into a companionway and disappear.

"Why, there's your father now," he blurted out.

She laughed.

"I thought it was he for a moment myself. But I saw it wasn't when I looked closer. Let's go up to the bow, shall we?"

Carter followed, thinking hard. Why should she try to deceive him about Dickson's presence on the ship? She had been surprized as much as he by the man's sudden appearance, and her pretense that a chance resemblance had deceived them both was wholly apparent, as was her motive for changing the subject and getting him away. What did it mean? He seemed to become more and more involved as time went by instead of gradually untangling himself.

They later found their steamer chairs and had scarcely settled down in them when she shivered and half arose.

"I think I'll get my rug. Stay here, and I'll return in a moment."

CARTER nodded, but his eyes were hard and cold as a second later he followed her into the companionway. She went straight to her stateroom on the lower deck, unlocked the door and had scarcely entered when George Dickson appeared and followed her into the room. Carter moved cautiously along the deck. Luck was with him. The slatted blind was lowered, but the sash was up. He had only to loiter and listen.

"But he suspects. He is waiting on the upper deck till I come back. He saw you. Oh, why did you have to choose this boat, father, when I was so sure you would go East as we had planned?"

Dickson's response was inaudible, but the girl's sharp exclamation was distinct enough.

"What, on this boat? I thought you had killed him."

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Another inaudible answer from her father and then a laugh, half-hysterical, from the girl.

"It's too funny. He doesn't dream that I know. Of course, I was going to keep him over in Cuba as long as I could until you had all the chance you needed to escape so that not even he could follow you. It was all that I could do, but I thought it would be useful to get the best man in the country off the track. I felt you could get away from the others, but I was terribly afraid of the Bloodhound."

"Good girl. Quite right. As it happens, it may be all right. He is bound to find me, of course; but, if you can keep him busy until I can——"

He stopped abruptly as he saw the girl's face.

"Why, what is wrong—don't you want to go on with it?"

"It isn't that, father, but I—I am beginning to like him! He has been so wonderfully good to me."

Dickson's face darkened. His body grew rigid. His hands closed and tightened, but, before he could speak again, Carter had yielded to an overpowering impulse and stepped boldly inside the stateroom to face the blank, startled look of father and daughter. He bowed formally.

"Miss Dickson, I want to set your mind at rest. I decided, before we left Albany, to help you get away and to help your father, too, if I had the chance. I have been relieved of duty as a Government officer, and I have the right now to use my own judgment. I'm sorry I didn't tell you long ago, but I didn't dream that you suspected my identity."

He turned to Dickson.

"You need have no anxiety, Dickson. I'm not tracking you or anybody. I'm through with the profession forever. I have only accompanied Miss Dickson so far because I believed she was leading me to you and I wanted to help you get clear if I could. Also I wanted to be on hand in case she needed protection. This is the truth. You may not believe it yet, but you will see for yourself when we reach Cuba. I am returning immediately from there, alone."

Dickson's face brightened slowly. He held out his hand, but Carter seemed not to see it. He bowed stiffly to the girl and would have turned away without more words had she not stopped him quickly.

"Please, Mr. Carter. You must not bear malice. You were doing your best to deceive us, weren't you? You should not mind my having deceived you."

Carter reddened.

"It's not that, Miss Dickson. I—I was fool enough to think that you were letting me come with you because you wanted me to escape; because you were interested enough in me to risk yourself."

He stumbled hopelessly; color came into the girl's cheeks, but she laughed lightly enough.

"You surely don't object to my having regarded you as something other than a fugitive, Mr. Carter? I was trying to draw you off the track, I admit, but it was both easier and harder than it would have been if you had not turned out to be exceedingly different from what I imagined the Bloodhound must be like. I was sorry to play a shabby trick on you, and I was glad that the circumstances did not make it necessary for me to feign friendliness toward a bloodthirsty, relentless brute who tracked human beings to the death for sheer love of it. Won't you shake hands and call it quits?"

"Feign friendliness, that's what I meant." Carter held his place. "It isn't necessary for you to do that any more, Miss Dickson. I don't have to be hoodwinked now."

"Oh, stop talking nonsense," she interrupted eagerly. "I wasn't pretending at all about that; I was trying hard to keep from liking you all along. There, let's be sensible. Father has news for you."

"All in good time, Clara," cut in Dickson quickly. "It may be just as well for Carter to stay in the dark about that for a little while. If he knows, he will want to act, and I've work to do first."

The girl spoke quickly.

"But he wouldn't have to act. He is out of the Service, free to do as he pleases. Tell him, father; it isn't fair to keep him in ignorance another minute, thinking you are a runaway murderer when you are not."

A load lifted suddenly from Carter's mind. Even the discovery that Clara Dickson's friendliness had not been a sham had only deepened the shadow which hung over her because of her father's guilt and peril. If by some miracle Dickson had not killed Black . . . .

"Tom Black is on board this boat, Carter.

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I trailed him straight across the country and nearly lost him. I just did catch the steamer, finally. He doesn't know. He thinks he has shaken me off. And tonight he and I are going to have the talk I've been waiting for nine long years. After that, if you don't want him, somebody else can take him back to Milford to answer for the murder of his man Thompson. I caught him almost in the act.

"When I came into his room, he was bending over Thompson's body; he must have killed him while you and I were downstairs. I thought I had him when I cried out as I did. We were three stories up, and there was only one door to the room. But he dropped out of the window before I could wink. I was after him like a shot, but he was too quick for me. He must have had a car waiting somewhere.

"I nearly lost him then, but I picked up the trail at the Atlanta railway station and hung on to it all the rest of the way. Of course, I might have headed him off by telling what I knew, but that would not serve my purpose, and there was always the chance that the police would muddle things and let him get away if I let them get near me. I had to have my talk with him first; after that it doesn't matter what happens. As things stand, I have all the cards in my hand. He's got to tell me what I want to know now, because I can threaten him with the electric chair, and poor old Thompson is beyond his reach now."

Carter sat in a daze of bewildered relief. Dickson wasn't a murderer after all. Clara wasn't a murderer's daughter. And the trivial detail of the escape from Atlanta Prison and the remainder of a sentence yet to be served failed to lower his spirits. These things could be arranged. He had a powerful weapon in his hands at last, a club which could force the prison commission to be open to persuasion in the matter of a pardon.

"Shake hands on it," he said, and they did, all three, after which they discussed ways and means very earnestly, indeed.

THE gray-haired man in the lower berth looked up calmly as George Dickson came into the stateroom. A faint smile crossed his lips, and the eyes which met Dickson's fearlessly were bright with malice.

"So you've put your head in the noose after all, Dickson. I thought you would. Don't stir; I have you covered."

Dickson shrugged his shoulders and dropped casually on the cushioned locker that faced the berth. He laughed gently.

"I'm not armed, and I'm not here to kill you, Black. I'm offering you a chance at a bargain. Your life against a full and complete confession exonerating me in the fraud business against the Government. A confession that will hold water in court, I mean, and—" his voice hardened—"and the full truth about my daughter, Mary.

"Satisfy me on those points, and I'll hold my tongue. Try to lie or evade, and I'll go to the captain with the whole story."

"And get yourself hanged for your pains," said Black smoothly. "Or I believe it is electrocution now. You fool, Dickson, do you think you can browbeat me? I can prove my identity—prove it thoroughly. There has never been a time when I couldn't riddle any charge that I was Black. And you are wanted for the murder of Thomas A. Black. One word from me will put you in irons and start you back to Milford and the electric chair. You haven't any bargain to offer me."

Dickson laughed pleasantly.

"You are pretty clever, Black, but you're not superhuman, and you've made two or three mistakes that you don't know about. The first one was trusting implicitly in your hold on poor Thompson. He kept us on your track right along, terrified as he was."

"He's not likely to interfere any more, however," said Black comfortably. "I admit a certain want of discretion in my attitude toward him, but I fancy I have corrected that. You will find it very difficult to prove that the body found in my rooms at Milford was that of Thompson. I took some pains to prepare the setting by imitating his appearance as far as I could and having him stay out of sight until I was ready to act. Besides, the birthmark matter has been very convincing.

"The stupid brute below stairs will swear through thick and thin that he never saw me in his life and that Thompson was the man who occupied the flat above him. There are several others equally certain about it, and you obliged me tremendously by coming into my room just when you did—and even more by calling out in that indiscreet fashion. I'm afraid you exaggerate my mistake there, Dickson."

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"Perhaps, but you forget that before Thompson broke jail they had taken his Bertillon measurements and finger-prints, and it won't be hard to establish his identity when they know where to look. Also, if you'll reflect, you'll realize that Thompson was under arrest at the time you were very busy in Chicago; so you won't be able to claim he was Tom Black. I don't think I'm overestimating that mistake, Black, but it doesn't matter. You've made some others."

Black's voice was still even and calm, but his eyes wavered, and the pink of his face whitened perceptibly.

"For instance, please?"

Dickson leaned forward.

"You've left finger-prints on four of the letters you sent to the Secret Service, and they have kept them all. It is a very simple matter to prove that you wrote them. I think you'll admit that is really a serious one, Black."

"Perhaps, but not wholly conclusive evidence. I think I could evade even that. There's a very clever Secret Service man in New York who has an idea that Tom Black merely claimed credit for other men's crimes. I shall take the hint and plead guilty to that folly. It is not punishable, you will find."

"We'll see. I think I have made out a case. And now we will come to the bargain again. I've had a confession drawn by some excellent lawyers, and it is ready to sign. But first I'll have the whole truth about Mary. Where is she, Black?"

Black laughed.

"It won't work, Dickson. You don't interest me. I'm willing to hold my tongue and give you a chance for your life, but that's all. You can't bid high enough."

"No? Then listen to this. A man by the name of J. L. Scott was killed, while I was still at Atlanta Prison, by a partner of his who went by the name of 'King' and who made his escape. King doesn't know that Scott recovered consciousness before he died and left a full ante-mortem statement declaring that King killed him because he accidentally discovered that King and Thomas A. Black were one and the same.

"But it's a fact. And it is also a fact that there were a number of finger-prints on different things in Scott's room which agree exactly with those on the letters I have mentioned. So, you see, Black, I have a little murder charge to match yours. And you'll find it hard to evade, too."

There was a tense pause. Then Black spoke in a harsh, strained whisper.

"What do you offer?"

"Just what I said. My silence against your silence and the confession and the story of Mary. Only you will have to confess the Milford murder now. My price has gone up since I came in. I mean to be absolutely clear. Confess the whole plot, and I'll agree to say nothing about you to any one until the ship reaches port and for ten days afterward. Then I'll surrender and file the confession and give my evidence. That is my best offer. I'll give you one minute to take it. After that I'll talk to the captain and take my own chances. First of all, where's Mary?"

"She died long ago. I—I cared for her, Dickson. You don't think so, but that was real, that affair. Go to Seattle, if you like, and look up the records in the hospital there. They'll tell you whether I suffered when she died. I loved her."

"That's enough."

Dickson's voice shook a little. For years he had hoped that his daughter might have died, but the knowledge hurt him sorely, none the less. And he believed, in spite of his hate for the man who faced him, that he had heard the simple truth.

"Now the other confessions, if you please. I'll add to the one I've prepared so that it will cover the Milford affair, too."

He wrote a few moments and carried the paper to the broken man in the berth. Tom Black read the paper deliberately, his face expressionless.

"Do you really think I'll sign my life away like this, Dickson?" He flung the confession carelessly on his coverlet. "I wondered how far your lunacy would carry you."

"You won't sign then? It's your last chance. I've given it to you because, scoundrel as you are, I think you really told me the truth about my daughter."

Black touched the button on the edge of the berth.

"When the steward answers that, I shall give you in charge for the murder of Thomas A. Black. If you're still in this room," he announced, "we shall see who wins."

"That's your last word?"

"The very last!"

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"I'm almost sorry, Black, because it doesn't matter a bit whether you sign the confession or not. You've condemned yourself a dozen times since I've been in this room, and every word has been recorded by the ship's stenographer in the hearing of Captain Wainswright and of Robert Carter of the Secret Service. Come in, gentlemen."

He opened the door, and Carter and the captain entered. Black did not move. His eyes rested steadily on Carter.

"So you're the Bloodhound," he said half to himself. "I've often wondered when you'd take my trail. I didn't think you'd find me. I seem to have miscalculated generally. There is a price to pay for such errors, and I'm willing to pay it."

His hand moved quickly as Carter flung himself across the narrow room. A shot reverberated deafeningly in the cramped space, and then he wrested the gun from the futile hand.

"Not that way, Black, I'm afraid."

"Another error," said he. "I'm rather clumsy today."

"WELL, you showed us all up after all." Warren clapped Carter's shoulder as he spoke. "It did my soul good to hear the chief swallow his talk in there. I had it coming to me, too, but he was even worse than I. It wasn't Warren who discharged the Bloodhound, I thank my lucky stars. This means the top for you, old man, and I wish you luck. You've earned anything you get."

"Oh, I have resigned," said the Bloodhound casually. "I'm through, as soon as Dickson's pardon is fixed up. I've had enough of man-hunting for the rest of my life, and I'm going back to Cuba and start all over again."

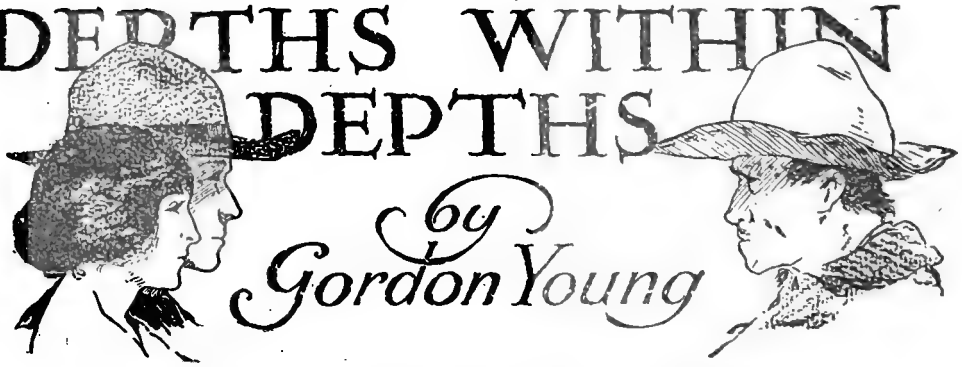
There was a chorus of expostulations as the others crowded about him. Warren expressed the general feeling when he summed it up.

"You're raving, Carter—when you've pulled off the biggest thing that's been pulled in years, to go and throw yourself away on a sugar-cane ranch in that God-forsaken country of Cuba."

Carter's eyes grew dreamy as the vision of a tall, queenly girl came before him; at the memory of those sweet, merry, brown eyes and the pressure of her warm lips on his as she bade him good-by and promised to wait until he returned. And he smiled now, not at vague hopes and dim air-castles he had been building for so long, but at wonderful, vivid realities. He said gently:

"Oh, the sugar plantation isn't the only thing in Cuba that attracts me, boys. I don't think I'll exactly go to waste out there!"

DEPTHS WITHIN DEPTHS



by Gordon Young

Author of "The Mask of the Iron Face," "The Good Loser Wins," etc.

I CAN explain best what I mean by referring to poker. It has depths within depths. A man bluffs on a bobtail. You know he is bluffing because you are a good judge of human nature. That is easy.

But supposing that he is a better judge of human nature than you: he knows what will make you think he is bluffing, and he will get you to call when he has a straight flush. But again, if your perception is keen, you may see clear through that

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imitation of a bluff and throw your hand away.

Yes, but supposing that he is so deep a player that with the bobtail he can play it so that you think he is pretending to bluff with a royal in his fingers and drives you from the pot?

And so it goes; the depth of the game of life and love and poker is unlimited, and the only reason you can tell a "four-flusher" before the show-down is because he isn't clever enough to play his hand as if he had 'em.

I'll make this short because I'm really not telling a story but illustrating a point. Freda Barton was a good judge of men, and a mighty fine girl to be in the Scorpion Dance-hall—which wasn't as bad as it sounds, even at that. I ran a poker game there, and, because I had a daughter about her age East in school and didn't want to be a "father" to any other girls, Freda used to grow confidential with me.

"I hate the life, Dad," she would say at times, "but what can I do? Marry? Sure. I'd marry any man I could respect—and love him, too. I want somebody that can protect me and him. In this climate that means you have to marry a gunman—a real one!

"Look at the fellows around here! There's Tom Wiggins—a killer. No manhood. And he has everybody scared stiff as a lizard on ice. I want a man who is the real thing—the real West in him. Lots of good boys, but stupid. Lots of fellows not stupid but loud-mouthed. Bragging all the time. And the silent ones—well, I trust you, Dad." And with a laugh, "But you are married."

THEN Dan Macready landed in our town.

We all looked him over and waited listeningly, expectantly. But he didn't say anything about where he came from, what he had done or would do. When asked, he said he came from "over there" and waved a vague hand toward the sky-line. We took the hint and continued to look him over. His Stetson showed wear. No silver on the hat-band, and the brim was medium. He wore a brown coat and vest, a little rubbed at the elbows. He had corduroys, fairly new, and the inside of the legs showed wear, saddle-wear.

Boots, dime-heeled; and he wore the corduroys outside the tops. He packed a Colt .44, loose on the hip, low down, and a plain belt—no shells, no place for shells. One hand was soft and white. Gloves do that, and a gunman doesn't wear gloves on his gun-hand. No. His face was brown, deeply tanned. Steady eyes, and he was handsome. Had a "way" with him, a manner, carriage or whatever it is. But his voice—he didn't use it much—but it was a wonderful voice. Deeply cadenced, low and flexible.

I didn't see how any woman could resist that voice; Freda seemed to think the same.

He played a little poker. I watched him closely. It was a fair game. He drank a little. Listened, talked pleasantly, asked no questions—but how he did watch and listen!

"Lookin' for somebody," I thought.

"What you think of him, Dad?" Freda asked one evening, early.

"You ought to be better informed than me. You and him have been hittin' it off pretty much."

"Yes," she said slowly, thoughtfully. "Funny. I like him—but I don't know. He looks good. Yes. But there's something—I can't explain it. Do you think a tenderfoot could pass it off?"

"Them corduroys spent a lot o' time over a saddle," I said.

"I noticed. I've looked him over. I like him, too. But I wonder."

Tom Wiggins kept getting grouchier and grouchier. He sized Macready up and down. Looked him over for weeks. It was the fellow's voice and silence that bothered Tom. Silence most of the time—then the pleasant, carrying voice that just made you try to think of something that simply wouldn't be thought of.

At last it came—the show-down. Or at least we all thought it was the show-down.

It started over Freda. Most things around there did seem to start over her. I never did know, but I wondered if she did it on purpose. Women do things like that—to see what's in a man.

Anyway, she found herself demanded for the same dance by Wiggins and Macready. She'd promised it to both.

Macready was leading her out when Wiggins ups and lays claim.

"Mine," says Wiggins.

"I beg your pardon," says Macready

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quiet-like, but that voice awful tense—"Miss Barton has promised me this dance!"

"Mean I'm a liar!" Wiggins yells, jumping back and aching to start something.

"I mean Miss Barton has promised me this dance," Macready repeats.

Wiggins started to reach, but he changes his mind and puts his hands up. Macready simply poked a gun up against his belt-buckle and said:

"You villain, I love this girl! Get out of my sight and don't let me see your evil face again!"

Some remarks, them. I kind o' caught my breath. And the way he said it: that voice rang out like he meant it. And Wiggins went, too.

Freda had both arms around his neck in about two seconds and was weeping.

They didn't dance that night. No. They went off and talked. And about a week later they were married.

Me and my wife take a trip East once a year to see the girl in school; and we drove thirty miles to get the train. And on the stage was Macready and Freda—going on a honeymoon to New York, she said. She acted a little queer toward me, seeing as how we had been such friends. Looked happy enough and all that—but a little shy.

On the train that night Macready and me was alone in the smoking compartment.

"Well," he said happy-like, "I'm glad to get back to New York to my work."

It didn't hit me all at once. But I gradually got it and gasped out—

"Your what!"

He smiled.

"I'm an actor, you know. Being featured in Westerns—thought I'd better come out and study. I wanted to give them the real thing back East."

"But that draw——"

"That what?" he asked, puzzled.

"That draw on Wiggins—you had your gun out——"

He laughed:

"I know. We heroes pull guns out a good deal on the stage, and I have practised that a lot. But shoot—honest, I never shot anything but blanks in my life!"

"You're a deep one, all right," I said relieved. "For a minute you had me believin' you was an actor!"

"I am—Daniel Macready. Look me up. I love the Western rôles. I want to be the best and do the best. I've studied every detail. Why, I stained my right hand—the gun-hand—and left the other nice and white. I stained my face. I never had a tan except at the beach. And that outfit—corduroys and all—I bought from a cowboy on his way back from Kansas City.

"And as for that little run-in with Wiggins—why, I played all last Winter in 'The Cowman's Daughter,' and the trouble starts over a dispute as to who shall dance with her. The fellow reaches for a gun, and I beat him to it, and I say: 'You villain, I love this girl! Get out of my sight and don't let me see your evil face again!' "

I was convinced.

"Does Freda know?"

"Yes. Everything."

Mother and I laid over in Chicago a few days to see some relatives of hers; then we went on to New York to see the girl. And there I inquired around for some plays with Dan Macready in them. We went—and it was Western and all that, but the actor fellow wasn't our Dan Macready. No. He wore a hat with a ton of silver on the band, big red bandanna and I don't know what all. Only his voice was something like our Dan's.

BACK home six months later I heard something enlightening.

George Bardoes, desperado, gunman, highwayman and all-around cow-puncher, had busted out of San Quentin over in California a year or so before and laid quiet. Officers searched high and low and couldn't get a glimpse of him. Then they learned he had been at the Palace in San Francisco right under their noses for weeks, posing as Dan Macready, actor, out West to study up for plays.

How he come to drift into our town, I don't know. It was a long way from the railroad. Maybe that was why. So his face was stained tan and the glove-hand, too. And maybe he had bought those clothes off a cow-puncher on the train. But he said he'd told Freda everything—so I guess it was all right. Freda was the sort of girl that would make a man be good—if he loved her.

And, while Macready wasn't much of a poker player, he knew about that depths within depths—and had cultivated the voice to play the game.

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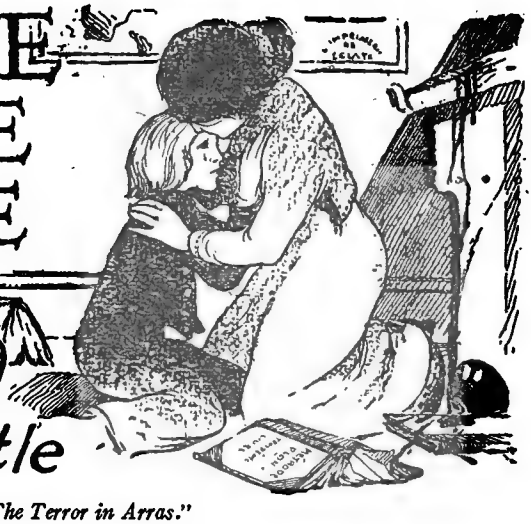
AUGUSTE AND THE SUPREME BEING



by Agnes and Egerton Castle

Author of "The Terror in Arras."

AUGUSTE was the littlest boy, and by his teacher the most beloved.

The cultivation of the affections was not among the studies encouraged in the municipal schools in the year three of the republic, one and indivisible. The legislative council of France was indeed at that moment engaged upon a new code of law, which included, among other wise measures, the fostering of "independence in the family;" the revolt against authority was to be logically extended to all sections of the community, and the terrorist was to bud in the home.

Nevertheless little France must be taught, and so the Citoyenne Latombe had the charge of some forty small Jacobins in the *Quartier des Écoles*.

Auguste was the youngest, as has been said. He was not yet eight and came to school so early because his was a motherless home. A serious, big-headed, little boy, with wide-apart luminous hazel eyes. A shock-head of ash-blond hair and a close mouth, the under lip of which slightly jutted as if in determination. He was a silent child, given to drifting apart from his comrades, but well able to hold his own in the playground of the junior class. He did more than hold his own in the schoolroom.

When the *citoyenne* teacher put a question or gave an instruction, she was sure to find that gaze of vivid intelligence fixed upon her, eager to absorb or respond. He had often gone to the head of the form upon some leap of the brain beyond his years. When he had to yield it again before the accumulated knowledge of an eleven-or twelve-year-old competitor, he presented the same front to reduction as to promotion—the folded mouth with the outthrust lip, the gravely steady eyes, the odd composure.

Not that there was anything unchildlike about him; there are child philosophers, infants indeed, in whom contemplation and self-communion precede speech. But among a turbulent noisy community he was remarkable, and the Citoyenne Latombe had remarked him long before their singular bond of affection became linked up.

She was a pale young woman, as grave and silent in her own sphere as her youngest scholar in his. Her relations with her pupils were purely professional. She was scarcely ever known to address a word to them outside those necessary for instruction or rebuke. She came to her daily task—and left—alone. But it was known among the boys that she could be seen with an old man, marketing on a half-holiday.

One of the elder youths—whose father was a member of the convention, sitting high-perched in that section yclept "the Mountain," from which the finest patriotism thundered and lightened—vowed one day that the old man carried the basket and had been heard to address his companion as *mademoiselle!* The rumor spread like wild-fire among the schoolboys. The instructress who was so tyrannical; who kept them grinding at their desks such long

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Summer hours when the Seine ran blue and gold and the whole city was full of inspiring spectacles; who imposed such odious restrictions on the liberty of the individual—she was an aristocrat in disguise, an enemy of the country.

Thirty-nine little boys felt themselves not only justified but actually bound to multiply acts of insubordination against the hated rule until the danger to the state should be eliminated from their midst.

Brutus Pelletier, whose father sat in the peaks—he had been christened anew since the glorious rebirth of France—declared openly that all schools ought to be abolished and that he had heard his father say that half an hour in the Place de la République, where the guillotine gave its salutary lessons, would be more instructive to the youth of Paris than a year on the school bench. Nevertheless, Brutus continued to experience in his own person the difficulty which the most advanced reformer feels in reconciling theory with practise. He was all the more eager for that respite which a change of regimen was bound to produce.

When thirty-nine scholars are uproarious, the assiduity and good conduct of the fortieth is bound to stand out in high relief.

CITOYENNE LATOMBE, finding little Auguste solemnly going round the desks and picking up the scattered copy-books, pencils and slates after the exit of his class in hilarious defiance of discipline, broke through her rule and stopped to speak to the busy child.

"What are you doing there, my little man?"

He straightened himself, looked at her with astonishment and then made a gesture of a small, dirty hand toward the litter. Superfluous speech was a weakness he contemned. The school-teacher smiled. She looked quite young when she smiled, but no little boy had ever known her to do so before.

"I see very well," she said, "what you have done, but I don't see why."

The child's face reflected the smile. And then the teacher realized that she had never beheld him smile either. It was a transfiguration. An arch dimple came at the corner of his wide lips; there was mischief, an adorable play of baby frolic, about the usually solemn face. He bowed from his hips and explained,

"To save you trouble, *citoyenne*."

She put out her hand. It was assuredly one to convict her of the crime of which her pupils were beginning to accuse her; the hand of an aristocrat, with long, ivory-pale, pointed fingers and almond-shaped nails. She brushed the tumbled hair from his forehead. It was moist from his exertions.

"Ah!"

Something gave way in her heart—that padlock of prudence that she had set there this long year—and all kinds of womanly emotions, gentle, sweet and half-forgotten, broke loose. She had called herself Latombe, because her real self was dead and buried; the creature that went about and taught the juvenile patriots was an automaton, working with the conscience of a machine. But no one is dead merely for the willing. She knew herself quick as she bent and kissed the damp childish brow that was the luminous seat of such serious thoughts.

As Auguste had reflected her smile, so he now echoed her cry; so he responded to her caress. He flung his arms about her and fervently kissed the only place he could reach, which happened to be her waist belt.

She bent again, and they hugged each other. She could feel him caper. And, when she released him and stood wiping her eyes—for tears had sprung, too, out of that locked heart now so unexpectedly rent—Auguste capered again, his odd pansy-shaped face solemn once more. He was a child to take even joys with gravity. He stopped his prancing suddenly and looked up at her.

"I have no mama, you know."

"My poor lamb!"

He wagged his head with an elfish mournfulness.

"You see," he said, "the poor mama—it was all too sad."

Citoyenne Latombe sat down on the floor among the copy-books and slate-pencils and invited her youngest pupil into her lap. He accepted the overture with a quivering return of smiles and, having established himself, patted her encircling arm and then his own chubby nankeen-clad knee once or twice with an air of satisfaction, as one who said—

"This is very comfortable."

The *citoyenne* gently resumed conversation.

"She was sad, your poor mama?"

"Oh, very sad."

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He lifted his brilliant eyes and fixed them with the deepest earnestness upon her.

"God is dead, you know," he said.

The teacher gave a little gasp; then she answered in a hushed voice.

"But yes, *mon petit homme.* He died for us."

"I don't know why He died." Auguste wagged his head again, but rather wearily. Sorrow is the one really tiring thing to a child. "But it killed my mama."

"Tell me all about it."

The teacher's arms folded more closely round him.

"You see I can remember when God was alive!" He nodded. "Everything was so different. There weren't any *citoyens* or *citoyennes* then, and I was mama's little boy and sat on her knee, and we had two servants, and they called her *madame,* and they called my father *monsieur,* and—" he lowered his voice to a whisper—"we used to pray to the good God at night—and in the morning. But I remember it best at night, because I would sit just like this in my mama's lap and she would tell me a story—after I had had my soup.

"You know, before I went bye-bye. And then I would kneel upon her knee, and she made me fold my hands, like this, and she used to make me say after her: '*Not' père—*'" He interrupted himself. "It was to God, you understand; not to my own father. It went on—I forget! It is so long ago. I was little, little. But I remember—I do remember, oh, so many, many things!" He heaved a deep sigh. "It was then I was a happy little boy."

The teacher's breast heaved. Such a short while ago—that long, long time for a baby memory—how happy she had been, too.

"And then God died," said Auguste.

"But who told you that?"

"Oh, it was mama. We used to go and see God—not see Him, you understand, but He was somewhere there all the time with a lamp before Him. Mama said so. And I used to go and give Him candles and light them myself. And one day—one day, when I ran up the steps with my sou, the church door was shut. And I cried, and mama cried, too. And she said: 'There isn't any more the good God! *Il n'y a plus de bon Dieu.*' "

"But your mama didn't tell you God was dead, then, did she?" suggested the *directrice.* "God had gone out of His house. When people do that, it doesn't mean they are dead."

Auguste insisted.

"Yes! Yes! That was what she had meant, and the father had said it, too, and mama had cried so—worse than at the shut church."

THE scene was before him, collored like a page of a picture-book. He saw the yellow flame of the candle and the big shadows it flung on his nursery ceiling and the red and blue Chinamen, with their funny black houses, on the curtain of his cot. His *popotte* was smoking on the table and his bye-bye waiting. He could feel the touch of his mother's hands upon him, through his nightshirt, as she supported his back while he knelt up. And his father had come in and found him kneeling on her lap. And all at once the whole pretty picture broke up—as he broke his set of bricks.

It was a muddle in his mind: the angry voice, his mama's sobs, the way his father had flung his arms about and the way the shadows of them ran on the ceiling. As big as an ogre's. But one thing stood out of the tangle of bewildering unpleasantness; how he himself had jumped off his mother's knee and run to his father, eager to understand:

"Is it because God is dead that I am not any more to pray?"

And the shout of laughter with which his father had caught him up, crying:

"The brat has more sense than you. Yes, God is dead, and you'll be a man one day, and no man prays to a dead thing."

His mother had cried out as if she had been struck. He, Auguste, had not been able to console her at all. And after that—he didn't know how long—she, too, was dead. First she had gone on crying, so the little boy thought, and then she was in bed, and then she was dead. Horrible memories these—shrouded all in black, black like his little frock and his father's big coat.

His father had taken him by the hand and brought him to the mama's bed, and something lay there: a woman quite stiff, like a big doll; only that dolls are not white—white. And he had screamed and hidden his face and called for mama! Mama! And his father had said—

"That is mama."

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And he had screamed still worse. Then his father had said—

"She looks like that because she is dead."

And he had asked—

"Does God look like that, too?"

It frightened him dreadfully, that thought, but no one understood him, least of all his father.

He remembered, also, how his father had sat down in a chair beside that terrifying smiling woman and buried his face in his hands, saying over and over again—

"*Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu!*"

The child had never dared ask him how it came that he had said that. But the problem went round and round in his little head time and again; since God was dead, why did his father—why did so many people—say, "My God," especially when they were sad?

Seeing his brows knotted, the teacher asked him what troubled him. He told her then in the involved way in which the infantile intelligence pursues its own quite clear thought. She had an answer for him; very quick, not like Suzon, the cook, who never let him speak of God at all or, if she did, had only one silly reply—

"Thou, thou art too little to bother thy head about such things."

The teacher's answer was so amazing that Auguste opened his mouth as if he had been caught by a sea wave.

"People are always trying to kill God, my little man, but He lives in spite of them, and they themselves can't help calling out upon Him!"

"But you said it, too, you said He died!" faltered the little scholar after a pause.

He had grown very red and then turned white again.

"He died and came to life," said the teacher. "He died that we might live. *Mon petit homme*, it is a long story, but I will tell you a little every day after class if you would like to hear it."

"Oh, I would," said Auguste.

He climbed off her lap and stood. His lips were folded now, the under one with its jut of determination. The teacher got up slowly and looked down at him, her eyes very tender.

"Run and play," she said, for she saw too much concentration for its years on that face.

"I will pick up the copy-books first," he announced. "Those boys are very untidy."

He made two or three little prances between his labors, from which the schoolmistress saw that he was happy in them. She tidied on her side. They met in the middle.

"It is finished," he shouted, with a huge puff of satisfaction.

"It is time to go home. They will be anxious."

He shook his head. No one was anxious about him; only Suzon scolded. She admired the distinction.

"I must go then," she smiled, "for some one will be anxious about me."

The old man who called her *mademoiselle?* The child wondered and clapped his hand over his mouth. Some instinct warned him he ought not to question, and he grew scarlet, for the words had nearly jumped out.

"Run, run, my little man! I must lock up."

She jingled a couple of big keys. He made her the bow that bent his little figure in two. How quaint and dear he was, with his frilled shirt, his nankeen trousers, his square shoes and his shock head. She opened her arms again; he gave a bound, and they had another hug.

"Tomorrow after class. It will be our secret!"

He nodded. She need not have said that to him, for he understood already; children love secrets, and they are most reticent where their untried hearts have been stirred. But there was more than this. No little French boy who was learning to call this month of July *Messidor* failed to realize that the Summer air was charged with disaster and death and that a word might bring a head to the scaffold.

When the sound of his feet clumping steadily across the courtyard became lost in the noise of the street, the Citoyenne Latombe who once had had another name, looked round the shabby classroom with an air of surprize. Its whitewashed walls were disfigured with a thousand marks of dirty, naughty hands, pencil drawings and ink stains. The windows were very high up, as befits a place where the wandering mind of youth should be pinned to its task. But across one of them was a branch of plane-tree that shuddered in the wind.

A long beam of light pierced in, shot with motes, and transfigured the new map of Europe that spread the first conquests of

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France to the gaze of future heroes. Generally Marie Gabrielle was glad to get out of this prison house, but today she lingered. She had not thought it could hold so much sweetness.

II

AUGUSTE went beside Suzon, trudging manfully with an increased air of independence to cover the fact that he was under petticoat guardianship.

She was an ugly old woman with a shriveled mask of a face, out of which black eyes were almost startling in their angry vivacity. Her figure was oddly shrunk about the chest and oddly developed under the blue-striped apron.

This bright morning of *Messidor*, Auguste, since he was walking with a woman, did not indulge in any of those sober skips with which he was wont to express his joy. Nevertheless his heart was singing within him. The unloved child had been granted love. The little soul, lost in a world of mysterious cruelty and emptiness, had found the arms of the Divine Fatherhood encompassing him again; the restless hunger of his mind had comforting food, and, delightful to a child's sense of importance, he had a secret to hug, which made him, in his private thought, superior to all his comrades. For five days now the face of the earth had been changed for him. His desert blossomed like the rose.

They came to a crossing, and Suzon put out a skinny hand to clutch him by the shoulder. They had to wait, for a confused crowd preceded and followed a tumbril conveying condemned toward the Place de la République. The child gravely watched it go by with its hideously rejoicing cortège. It was so usual an event in Paris, year three of the glorious republic, that those who did not join in inhuman glee beheld with scarcely any more pity than in less awful times the driving of a flock of sheep to the slaughter-house.

As Auguste trotted across the now clearing space beside the *ménagère*, he stared up at her.

"More enemies of France?" he questioned.

He had been well trained in his opinions; nevertheless there was doubt in his voice. Suzon turned her angry eye upon him.

"*Hé*, what dost thou suppose?"

"Therefore it is right to kill them?" pursued the child still more anxiously.

"*Hé*, what dost thou suppose?" repeated the other.

"There was an old man in the cart, and he looked so sad and so kind. Was he an enemy of France?"

Suzon's wild-boar eye took a red glare. He knew the sign and twisted his shoulder from her clutch before the slap could reach him.

He went back to her side when he judged it safe, and in silence they proceeded. His heart had taken up its bird song again. One more bit of street and a turning, and then he would be in view of the school. He had a flower, carefully hidden away in his little knapsack, to present to the teacher. It was a nasturtium out of a neighbor's back-yard. He thought it very beautiful. There were no flowers ever in or about his home now, though the mama had loved violets.

He was conning to himself the last of their private lessons. The *directrice* had told him, since nothing so secret could be written down, that he must try to remember them from day to day and repeat back to her what he had learned. They were all about God, these lessons.

A Being Supreme, Justice itself. Truth, Goodness, greater than any king, and more powerful. No one need fear, who served Him. Wicked people had wanted to kill Him, but He was stronger than the strongest. He loved France and every one in it, down to the littlest boy. Only trust Him; only love Him, and then, no matter how weak or how small, you would be safe—safe.

As the phrases rose in his brain, he mouthed them with dumb lips, stumbling over the big words, but sure of their meaning. He thought he remembered very well and that his dear one would be pleased.

Yesterday she had brought him a large yellow plum. He wondered what she would bring him today. He was very fond of chocolate. He wondered if she would guess that.

There was the street at last. And here was Marius Duval, his class companion—that most ill-mannered, that naughtiest of boys, who put out his tongue at the teacher even when she was looking at him and drew abominable pictures of her on his slate and wrote underneath—

To the guillotine with the aristocrat!

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Auguste knew aristocrat meant enemy of the people, and he was sure—oh, he was sure—that his schoolmistress was not of those. Perhaps, at times mistakes were made and some who were not enemies of the people were put into the tumbrils? The thought gave goose-flesh to Auguste. He felt his hair begin to prick. He remembered the eyes of the old man, so sad, so kind.

What was Marius doing, coming this way at the school hour? And why had he such a smirk? Auguste was seized with a sudden flame of fight. He smote his classmate fiercely in the chest and with a clever kick prostrated him in the gutter. His enemy lay and broke into a howl. The conqueror resumed his trot beside the old woman, panting a little and scarlet but otherwise apparently composed.

"Why did you do that?" asked Suzon, too amazed for rebuke.

"Because I detest him," said Auguste through his teeth.

His lip protruded, his jaw-bone became accentuated through the round curve of his cheek. She flung him a furtive glance. One would have said she was faintly frightened of him.

At the top of the Rue de la Harpe he started running, pressed by his loving spirit, and suddenly stopped, struck with a qualm similar to that which had seized him after the passage of the tumbril, but this time with the deadly convincingness of a repeated apprehension. There was silence instead of the clamoring note of the school-bell; two little boys were playing spillikins in the deserted roadway, and, worst omen of all, the gates of the school courtyard were shut.

A slouching figure came up toward him. It was Brutus. He had his hands in his pockets, and he, too, like Marius, was smiling odiously.

"*Eh! Bien*, one has arranged her, the aristocrat!"

"What do you mean?"

The child's lips were so dry they could scarcely form the words. The big boy gazed down at him with a countenance of ever broadening malice.

"Our fine *citoyenne directrice!*"

Auguste gave a scream.

"She is not an aristocrat! She is not an enemy of the people!"

"Is she not? The republic thinks otherwise. She was fetched yesterday, and well done, too!"

"Fetched?"

Auguste leaped at the bully as upon his classmate, pummeling, shaking, scratching like a little wildcat. But he was easily flung off. Brutus was not angry. He was enjoying the torments he inflicted too much for that, being the kind of boy that likes to stick pins through butterflies and beetles.

"Wilt thou come with me tomorrow to see her head hop? Did she not bother ours enough?"

"Where have they taken her to? Where is she now?"

Auguste was dancing on the cobbles in an ecstasy of misery—Brutus sauntered on, laughing.

"To the revolutionary tribunal, where else? Ah! He will arrange her, our Robespierre; my father will see to that!"

Auguste ceased dancing and stood, his hands clenched. He drew a long breath, charging himself, as it were, with fresh energy. Then he sped back up the street, passed Suzon at such a rate that her clutch toward him was vain.

"Where goest thou?" she bleated furiously.

"To the revolutionary tribunal," he called back.

He did not know the way, but a little boy can always ask.

"It's at the Conciergerie, *mon petit homme*, the big building you see yonder."

Mon petit homme! It was what his beloved called him!

"And what may you want with the revolutionary tribunal, little citizen?"

He never could wait to answer that, but obliging folk did not seem to mind his rudeness. They stared after him and laughed.

"I demand to be admitted," he cried to the Garde National at the great gaping portal.

They were two alarming giants with pikes, but they also had a smile for him.

"What dost thou want, if one may ask the citizen?"

"I have business with Robespierre."

That name of mortal omen rang out in his childish pipe with full assurance. There was a burst of laughter.

"Pass, citizen. The Incorruptible is within."

IT WAS the most singular apparition which that hall of injustice, of inhuman license, of sanguinary conclave, had ever seen in all its strange visions.

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The child stood and faced the pale monster who, clothed in manhood's shape, held in his hands the destinies of France; hands to the view of his fellow men as livid as his countenance, but in the sight of Heaven clothed with the blood of the innocent.

The little boy was hatless. His cheeks flamed like poppies; his shock of hair blazed above his bright forehead; his gaze was on fire with his great purpose. There was no trembling of his set lip. The whole gathering stared, but he had eyes for only one. Auguste cried aloud—

"Return my schoolmistress to me, Citizen Robespierre!"

"Thy schoolmistress?"

"I demand her back."

"Who has taken her then?"

"Thou—thou, Robespierre."

It was too comic. The whole assembly was convulsed—all but one, Pelletier, who sat high among those of the Mountain. He frowned.

"I, Robespierre?"

Even the tyrant was shaken with mirth. Robespierre laughed. That was a thing not often seen.

"She taught me at the school of the Rue de la Harpe. She is not an aristocrat. She is not an enemy of the people. Give her back to me!"

The *directrice* of the Rue de la Harpe? A woman who passed under the name of Latombe; who was to come up for trial that day, and whom some one—ah, yes, it was Pelletier yonder—had accused for some reason—Robespierre scarcely remembered what—of being a *ci-devant* in disguise. Pelletier! The glacial glance of the Incorruptible sought that high seat where that patriot sat. Pelletier was not among his favorites: an ambitious fellow—a man with designs—a man who might be dangerous. It was a mere flash of a look, a quick shift of thought, and Robespierre, still laughing, came back to the child.

"She taught thee, did she? Come, now; I'll swear you know nothing at all."

"I know a great deal—at least," Auguste corrected himself, "a great deal for a little boy."

Applause at this; the brat was enough to kill one!

"She has not taught you modesty."

The color deepened on the champion's face.

"It was because she taught me so well—*citoyen.*"

"If you can prove that, we'll strike a bargain—*citoyen.*"

No one had ever seen the demagogue in such humor. Sycophants there were to cheer him.

"Prove that she has taught you well, and you shall have her back. Can you demonstrate to me how two and two make five?"

"You mean two and three, *citoyen!*" Auguste was quick as lightning.

"Two and three," said Robespierre gravely. "*Ma foi,* you are right. But take three from two, and what remains?"

Auguste thrust out his disdainful under lip.

"You can not take the greater from the less."

"Can one not? Come, now—I will prove to you that you are wrong. Is not your instructress greater than you? Yet I have taken her from you? Make the sum quick. What remains?"

Auguste suddenly grinned.

"No school!" he flashed. It was like a game; then he drooped. "It is for that I am here. Give her back to me!"

"Well, I must own you have a notion of arithmetic. But what about other matters? Geography, for instance. Can you recite to me the possessions of France, young Mathematician?"

Auguste paused a second. The blood was pulsing in his temples; there were sparks dancing before his eyes; his whole small being was tense, like a strung cord. He remembered the great map hung on the wall of his dear classroom, and how the *citoyenne* had shown them, with pins, week by week, the advance of each victory. He cried shrilly—

"As far as the soldiers of France can march!"

He was a little frightened and inclined to cry at the shout which greeted this sally:

"*Vive l'armée de la République. Vive le petit patriot!*"

Eyes were bent on him from every side, with amusement, with tenderness, with delight. They were fathers, these men, many of them, and even the wild beast has a heart for its cubs. A glint, like sunshine upon ice, came into the bleak eye of Robespierre.

"I begin to think," he said when the clamor subsided, "that the child is right and that he has been uncommonly well taught. One more question. Repeat me the last lesson which this pearl of schoolmistresses has given you, and she shall go free!"

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Auguste collected himself, knotting his innocent forehead. It was their secret, but, if he disobeyed, they might put her in a tumbril. That one who was called Robespierre, he smiled and joked; but he was like the white cat in their street all the time—the white cat with the green eyes that you could not approach or touch ever so gently, even when she was purring, without being scratched to bleeding. Something, too, seemed to be all about this small Auguste, holding him up, strengthening him; yes, telling him to speak out, to have no fear.

"I was nearly forgetting," said the little boy to himself, "that there is no need ever to be afraid." He began conscientiously gathering his recollections. "She teaches me, my *directrice*—not in class, you know, but between us two, because I am her *petit homme*—that I must never be afraid."

His voice grew stronger. Yes, that was it! It was quite true; he was not afraid! He kindled as he went on.

"Because there is One—one Being," he fixed his gaze firmly on Robespierre, "above every one, much greater than any king—or any one—Who is so just, so strong, Who loves France, Who loves every one in France, even a little boy like me, Who has power, Who is Supreme, Who——"

He broke off, abashed by the great shout that arose: cheers, jeers, derisive laughter on one side; passionate acclamations of assent on the other. Like a ball tossed backward and forward, from the right and the left of him came cries and counter-cries:

"What a farce! Splendidly rehearsed! A little overdone, my faith!"

"The little one voices France. Long live the Friend of the people!"

Robespierre sat and looked from supporters to opponents; then he said quietly:

"Tell these good patriots the name of this being, the supreme, the strong, the just."

Auguste swelled his chest with an immense breath, flung a wild gaze from face to face and ended by fixing once again the man who looked more than ever, with half-closed lids, like the white cat. At any moment that white hand might strike out with iron claws. He cried in a loud voice of challenge—

"God."

The silence that had been made about them—the child and the terrible master of France—became accentuated. It spread as spreads in the pool the widening circle from the cast stone. Auguste felt all at once as if he had been relieved of a great weight; as if it did not matter what happened—he was so sure that he and his darling were being taken care of.

"Behold what a trap for thee, Citizen Robespierre!" came a mocking cry from a high-perched corner.

And somewhere down in the room a deep voice proclaimed—

"Truth issues from the mouths of children."

The Incorruptible rose and beckoned to the little boy. Bravely Auguste went, though his heart beat to suffocation. Something stronger than himself still inspired and controlled him. He felt himself lifted; then cold lips kissed him. The cold eyes peered closely at him; then he was set down, and a cold voice said above his head:

"I think, citizens, we may say that the instructress of this child has done good work for France—run back to school, little fellow! She shall be returned to thee, thy governess. Thou shalt not miss thy lessons today."

There was hardly a dissentient voice in the approval that resounded; only indeed that of Citoyen Pelletier, but he bellowed protest in vain.

AUGUSTE cuddled into his teacher's arms as she sat on the floor of the dirty classroom, and the plane tree beat against the window—for it was breezy afternoon—and the sun lit up the map of France. In a small chipped vase on the teacher's desk a nasturtium flaunted its orange and red. It was rather battered but it was still a handsome flower, and Auguste surveyed it from time to time with complacency.

He had waited long hours in perfect faith for the fulfilment of the Incorruptible's promise.

"*Tu sais*," he explained to his teacher "that cat-man, I could never like him, but knew he had to set thee free."

"What makes thee say that, my little man?" asked Citoyenne Lat mbe.

She was very pale, and the tears kept coming to her eyes. Auguste couldn't think why, since she was safe. He drew back now to look at her in astonishment.

"Why? But of course, since God is dead!"

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THE SPIRIT OF HIS YOUTH

By Romaine H. Lowdermilk

Author of "Too Much Caution."

THE first dash of sleet caught the chuck-wagon three miles from its destination. Old Toby Enfield glanced upward surprizedly.

"Hup! Mules!" Old Toby, still peering at the low swirling clouds, popped his whip expertly over the four. "You, Gyp! Mike! Belle! Git in outa this!"

Again the long whip cracked. The remainder of the distance was covered at a lope, with old Toby clinging to the seat like a terrified bug to a chip in high waters.

As the wagon careened across the last flat, Toby saw a tiny muffled figure emerge from the rear of the attractive ranch bungalow and plow an uncertain course through the buffeting wind toward the gate.

"That'll be little Sam." Old Enfield smiled. "Yeh, and he's gittin' the big gate open, too."

As the heavy wagon lurched through the gate, Toby yanked his flopping sombrero from his white head and returned little Sam's enthusiastic greeting.

"Hi-yah!" yelped old Toby. "Good work, Sam. Purty big gate fer such a little feller. Yeh."

Sammy's shrill response was drowned in the thunder of the wheels as the four mules sailed onward to the bunk-house. Little Sam, leaving the gate wide open, gave chase immediately, yelling at the top of his voice.

"Where's my daddy?" he demanded, coming up where old Enfield was painfully getting down from the wagon.

"He's comin'," Toby grunted. "Him and the boys're drivin' up the shippin' steers. Goin' to mail 'em to market this year—passel-post."

The child regarded Toby's labored movements in silence as if pondering this new departure in cattle shipping. But in a moment he had discovered a new and more intense problem.

"You got a new chuck-wagon, Uncle Toby?" he asked.

"Nope; same ol' outfit," replied Enfield wonderingly.

"Huh," commented Sammy in evident unbelief. "The tires look awful nice an' shiny."

"Five weeks scootin' over these flats with the round-up 'ud polish up most any ol' thing. I sure polished that seat up there, too," Toby crackled, deftly unhooking the chain traces. He was in a high good humor to be back at the home ranch. The prospect of again doing his cooking in the comfortable cook-house warmed his old heart. "Look out, Sammy," he ordered cheerfully. "Let the mules get past to the feedin'-pen. Mind they don't lam yuh one."

Little Sam drew close to old Toby and followed, clinging to Toby's gnarled hands. Already the sleet nestled in the folds of the canvas wagon-cover and along the crevices of the earth.

"Say, Sammy," Toby began kindly, "yore maw'll be out hollerin' fer yuh in a minnit. You better hike to the house."

"I'm wanta help you feed," objected Sammy.

"Shucks! Ol' Mike's liable to step right

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down on yuh," argued Toby. "You hike on home now. Like ' good boy. Yeh."

"'ll you cook me a s'prize?" Sammy bargained.

"Sure," agreed Toby eagerly. "I'll cook yuh a s'prize tomorrer. You hustle home. Just look what a blizzard's comin'."

Little Sam stared up at the clouds against the falling sleet, twisting his stout little body curiously. Suddenly he raced for the ranch-house.

"Unc' Toby'll cook a s'prize! Unc' Toby'll cook a s'prize!" His shrill voice, whipped by the wind, ended in a screech of childish joy as he skipped up the steps and disappeared through the door.

Toby hurriedly finished his outside work and limped stiffly across to the low cook-house, shoved open the thick door and stepped eagerly inside. Everything was as he had left it at the beginning of the Fall round-up. It appealed to old Toby—it was so neat and homelike. He sank into his comfortable chair beside the cold cook-stove and gazed about the rude room contentedly.

"This shore is a fine cook-house," he observed half-aloud, as was his custom when alone. "My, my! Ain't this choice."

Toby relaxed, his hands idle in his lap, listening to the rattle of the storm against the snug house. His eyes gazed unseeing at the stove. Just then it seemed to old Enfield that he couldn't think of anything better than to just be allowed to stay on at the Bar Z ranch and be the cook. When a man reaches the age of seventy, it is high time to begin to look around for some sort of a steady job for his old age.

Old Toby was beginning to sort of wonder how it happened he had never given thought to his advancing years. He had experienced the change from cowboy to cook without a qualm; he had accepted his new duties as a desirable variation from the arduous duties of a cow-hand and not as evidence of advancing years. He had outlived one generation of cowboys, and, as the youngsters came on, they knew old Toby only as a cook, and Toby had a hard time of it trying to convince them that he, too, had once been young and spry and a chief cow-puncher. Until today the idea of his being old had not occurred to him. He pondered the question sleepily.

"Shucks!" he mumbled. "Been too busy—too busy—jus' livin'."

And he dismissed the subject. Presently he arose and, kneeling by the woodbox, began to whittle a pile of pine shavings preparatory to starting a fire for supper against the time the boys would arrive weary from their all-day battle with the recreant steers and the elements.

"YEOW! Bet here's a day y'u wouldn't want t' be punchin' cows!"

The shout and the clatter of hoofs heralded the arrival of the cowboys. The steer herd, urged onward by the sleet-driven riders, bobbed reluctantly past the cook-house and across to the corrals. Old Toby peered over his spectacles at the dark forms moving by the window. Stepping closer, he gazed out at the rolling ranges, blurred with a mantle of swirling sleet and drizzle. A reminiscent smile wreathed his kindly face, and his little chin beard rose to bristle pleasantly against the pane.

"Huh, them boys call this weather."

Turning back to the room, old Toby lighted the oil lamp that was swung over the table.

"Shucks! Ef I could jist have 'em back on the trail to Dodge City like we used to git hit when I was punchin' cattle—snow an' rains an' No'thers an' stompedes! Glory! Them was tough ol' times."

The door was flung open, and four riders bulged in, stamping the icy coating from their garments and shaking the floor with the thump of their high boot-heels as they crossed to gather around the warm range.

"Say, Uncle Toby, this here's one day you don't hanker to be out in the storm. Now, honest, ain't it?" inquired Tiff Mason, leaning his long arms, hands outspread, over the stove.

Uncle Toby let the oven door fly shut with a bang.

"Thar yuh go ag'in—naggin' about bad weather. Shucks, this ain't no bad weather. I'd eat up this kind of weather; this ain't even a cool breeze."

"We found thet out," laughed "Elder" Berry. "We wallered through this here cool breeze all day, an' me, fer one, hadn't forecast such bronco breezes when we started out on the Fall round-up. I was what you might call unprepared."

"Me, too," shivered Tiff. "I felt like an old rooster looks when his feathers are shed off and he gets caught in a cold rain."

"An' say, Uncle Toby, when you left us

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this mornin', we was drivin' two hundred and fourteen base-hearted steers—an' just now we poked into that corral with the same number. Bet you couldn't done better forty or fifty years ago." Berry winked at his companions.

Old Toby Enfield regarded the group over the top of his spectacles like a Yankee school-marm about to reprove a class of tots.

"Five cowboys," he snorted. "The boss with yuh, wasn't he?"

They nodded.

"Yeh," Old Toby scoffed. "I mind onct back in Texas me and 'nother feller—" Toby briskly resumed setting out the savory meal he had "cooked up," and his voice raised to a high-pitched singsong—"gathered twelve hundred head down below Plainview and drove 'em up past where Amarillo is now in two weeks; and fer 'leven days of that time hit snowed stiddy—an' we never lost airy critter. Shucks! This weather over here ain't a patchin' to what we had them days——"

"It got colder forty years ago than it does now," Tiff explained to the others.

"Sure did," Toby quavered excitedly. "An' cold weather an' storms an' the like was jus' where I shine. Jus' let me git into the saddle in one of them ol' No'thers, and I freeze right thar—nothin' kain't shake me loose. Jingo! That's the kind of weather that makes hair grow on a man's chest——"

"Sure is," attested Tiff stoutly. "I haired out like a Galloway this afternoon facin' the breezes. But, of course, forty degrees below zero nowadays wouldn't tallyed more'n two below freezin' fifty years ago. Would it, Uncle Toby?"

"Course not!" beamed Toby absently. And, thumping the oilcloth with a spoon, he called his usual, "Come on an' git 't."

The boys came.

"Sam Forbes says we got to take them steers on into town tomorrow—ship 'em. How'd you like to have a job like that hangin' over you, Toby?" "Buckey" Gray managed to ask between mouthfuls.

"Easy," jeered Toby, his chin whiskers bobbing with excitement to tell these lads just what an utterly inconsequential job that would be. "Why, cowboy, you don't know what cowpunchin' is! By jingo, in my day to draw down cowboy wages a feller had to savvy. Why, we'd never think of sendin' more'n two men with a steer bunch of this size. Yuh only got fourteen mile to go, and the last five of them is along them fenced roads through the alfalfa farms this side of town. Shucks! There'll be you four, and Sam Forbes'll be bound to go along to keep you fellers on the job. Why, back in my day——"

"You was real ol' cow-punchers, wasn't you, Uncle Toby?" queried Tiff innocently.

"We thought we was, anyhow," Toby replied reminiscently. "Wish't I could go tomorrer and show you fellers what cowboyin' is. This stormy weather makes me feel like gittin' outside."

Gray laughed.

"Well, you're likely to feel different about it in the mornin' when it comes time to settle down in a hard, cold saddle on a cold, hard bronc. But, if you still want to, you're welcome to my place."

BY MORNING the storm had ceased. The sky was cloudless; no hint of the blizzard remained. Old Toby had smoke rising from the chimney of his cook-house before the morning star had faded. Breakfast was over and the boys in the saddle before the sun rose to set the earth's sleety covering to dripping. As the cowboys rode into the corral to set the steers moving toward town, Sam Forbes came down the steps from the ranch-house and strode slowly down the frozen pathway.

"Good morning, Enfield," he greeted old Toby kindly.

"Mornin', Forbes," responded Uncle Toby a little uneasily. He sensed what was coming.

"Uh—now, Uncle Toby, that bunch of steers winds up our season's work. There isn't much doing around here in the Winter; so we usually let the boys do their own cooking. So tomorrow I reckon you can take the mules and wagon on in town. Leave them at Blaney's and tell him they're to go out on alfalfa pasture and feed. He had them last Winter, and I suppose he'll remember. Can you make it?"

"Yeh," replied Toby mournfully.

"I'll try to see Blaney myself when I'm in town with these steers today, but I might miss him." Forbes paused and searched in his inside pocket. "Here's your check, Uncle Toby."

Old Toby reached to take the paper, and his hand shook a little more than usual. Sam Forbes noticed it. He always hated to fire a man, but his business necessitated it.

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He always tried to be as kind as possible; so he added.

"You've been a good hand, Enfield. If you're around in the Spring, I'd like to have you back."

"Thanks. Reckon I'll be around, all right. I like hit here, too," replied Uncle Toby.

Old Toby Enfield made a poor attempt at attending to business that morning. It wasn't cooking that filled his mind; it was a portentous puzzle. Never in all his seventy years had he given thought to what was to become of him in his old age. Life had been one long series of "jobs" in the cattle country. Toby Enfield had grown old in the wide ranges with never a thought to his own future welfare nor an attempt to possess a brand of his own. From day to day he had lived, spending his money freely and recklessly or as blithely borrowing money to "eat on" until round-up time and a job.

Always the fact that he was growing old hung far off, shadowy, fantastic. Now all at once it loomed over him—he was old. It scared him. He had felt the first qualms of it yesterday, but today it obsessed him. It was more dominating than ever at four o'clock when he had finished giving the place a thorough scrubbing so as to leave it in tip-top shape for the boys.

The sky had clouded, and the room was darkening. Occasionally a drizzling rain pattered against the north window and froze against the sill. Old Toby poked the fire and shoved in a chunk. He felt worn out and sat down in his chair for a rest.

"Guess I got everything scoured up," he mused, peering around through the growing dusk at the orderly little place. "Huh! Wish't I had some blackin'; I'd give that stove the scare of hit's life."

Toby chuckled. He always felt better when things were neat and clean, even if he were weary. He sighed contentedly and listened to the spatter of the icy particles against the window. He wondered what he would do through the Winter. Perhaps cook around some restaurant in town—maybe. But, he argued with himself, chances for a job in town were getting slim. Toby realized that other people, too, could see he was growing old. Few people wanted old folks.

Again Toby sighed, staring with unseeing eyes at the fire. It was so quiet and homelike in the little cook-house—it reminded him of the little sod shanties back on the plains when he himself was young and strong and life was but a holiday. Being "let out" during slack seasons, then, sent a thrill of joy and eagerness for new conquests instead of this chill of suspense and dread that came to him now.

Old Toby was startled from his revery by a child's voice calling:

"Uncle Toby—Uncle To-o-oby!" It was little Sam. "Unc' To-o-oby!"

"Oh, gosh! I fergot to cook that s'prize!" Old Toby jumped up briskly. "Hit'll have to be cookies—an' pow'ful quick ones at that."

"Uncle To-o-oby!" Wild fear and pain was in the childish treble. "Mama, *quick!*"

Old Enfield hopped to the door. Halfway up the path sprawled little Sammy, vainly endeavoring to rise. Already he was beginning to whimper.

"Fell down, by crackey," mumbled old Toby, venturing out on the icy path. "Keep yer grit, Sammy. Unc' Toby's comin' to help yuh," he called.

The door of the ranch-house opened, and a woman called excitedly.

"Oh, Sammy! What's the matter? Oh——"

"'Sall right, Mrs. Forbes," called Toby. "Lil' Sam jus' slipped."

Gathering the whimpering child in his arms, old Toby made his way toward the house.

"Fell down an' hurted he'se'f," chattered Sammy in Enfield's ear. "Hurted he'se'f—bad—arms." Little Sam was sobbing lustily now.

"Sho, now," soothed Enfield. "We'll take yuh to your mammy, an' purty soon Unc' Toby'll bring up the s'prize."

Toby had reached the steps of the ranch-house.

"Good evenin', ma'am," Enfield said primly.

"Come in the house; do hurry." Daintily, pretty Mrs. Forbes leaned breathlessly over the child. "Is mama's little Sammy hurted bad?" Deftly she brushed the tears from his chubby cheeks with her frivolous bit of lace and cambric. "I'm afraid he's hurt. Let me take him."

Old Toby relinquished the tiny burden and followed, at her command, into the house. He was highly surprized at the immaculate interior of Mrs. Forbes' kitchen.

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Toby had held an opinion that surely a woman as delicately beautiful as Mrs. Forbes must be utterly of no use whatever. But the spick and span kitchen was a revelation; he wanted to stop and look around awhile. At her call he shuffled deferentially into the long, low living-room, where a cozy flame smoldered in the wide fireplace. Mrs. Forbes had laid little Sam on the couch near the fire and was bending over him anxiously. It had been a long time since old Toby had been in such elegant surroundings, and he gazed about him dumbly. The woman's voice startled him.

"I—I—think Sammy has—fainted!" she gasped, clasping her pretty hands in appealing anguish. "Look, Mr. Enfield—look! He has!"

Toby gazed in surprize at the white figure on the lounge. Little Sam had ceased crying and was moaning intermittently.

"Sakes alive!" ejaculated Toby. "He must've broke somethin'. Here—let me look."

MRS. FORBES sank to the rug beside the fireplace in a halo of soft attire. She, too, moaned piteously. Old Toby regarded her wistful beauty a moment and then peered over his glasses at little Sam. His gaze wavered back to the woman.

"Doggone," grumbled old Toby, querulously. "What'd Sam Forbes want to go and marry sich a high-strung gal fer, anyhow. Too frilly, I'd say."

Her very femininity displeased him mightily. He glared at her curved figure an instant and turned to little Sam and began to loosen the garments. Presently he stole a worried look at Mrs. Forbes; then, slipping out to the kitchen, he returned with a dipper of cold water. This he splashed unceremoniously over her sweet young face.

Without a second glance he turned to little Sam. He remembered hearing Sammy complain of the pain in his arm and started an examination of those members. The right elbow had a strange, puffy appearance. Old Toby poked it experimentally. The child lurched and cried out with the pain. Toby jumped nervously.

"What is it?" came Mrs. Forbes' quiet voice. "Is Sammy's arm hurt? Do you think it is broken?"

"'S nawthin'," grunted Toby. "I kin fix hit in a shake. Shucks! When I was young, we didn't pay no 'tention to breaks and things— jus' wropped 'em up and went on. I kin splint this up good as anybody."

"Let me see it."

Mrs. Forbes had crossed to his side and was bending over little Sam. She gently felt the arm with her soft, tapering fingers. Toby noticed with increasing dismay that her nails were polished and that she had rearranged her hair since she had revived. She was caressing the child, crooning to him now.

"Mama," moaned little Sam weakly, "I'se hurted."

"Did he come to?" gasped Toby.

Mrs. Forbes did not heed him.

"Yes, Sammy, tell mama—where does it hurt most?"

Little Sam indicated his right arm. Again his mother felt gently from wrist to shoulder.

"It's his elbow," she announced presently. "A fracture, I think. We must have a physician at once."

"Physician!" snorted old Toby. "I can fix that in no time. Jist let me git a box; I'll whittle some splints——"

"Can you drive the car?" Mrs. Forbes interrupted him.

Old Toby shook his head emphatically.

"Ain't been in it since I been here. I cain't drive her, and, what's more, I ain't goin' to. I——"

"Then I shall," announced Mrs. Forbes decisively. "I must take little Sam to a physician."

"No need," objected Toby. "See this here lump on my arm?"

He rolled back his sleeve and exhibited a lump about the size of a hen's egg on his forearm.

"Hoss throwed me—an' run over me—an' come back and kicked me right thar. Busted her plumb in two. An' did I have to git a physician? Naw, ma'am! I set that bone myself, and she growed back good as ever. Them doctors ain't got nothin' on me. Why, onct me an' 'nother feller was——"

"But, Uncle Toby, this is a fracture of a joint. I must take little Sammy to town immediately, in the car."

Her insistence irritated Mr. Enfield. The idea that this little young girl should

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presume to know more about busted bones than he—old Toby Enfield—was nothing short of annoying. Old Toby had long since lost all his youthful gallantry, and he considered women generally as a ubiquitous nuisance, much as would a twelve-year-old boy. So he offered objections unabashed.

"Yuh'll freeze him to death a-goin'."

"You can go along and hold him—wrapped in blankets," she smiled.

"Huh," grunted Toby. "How're yuh goin' to ford the crick?"

"Oh! Oh!" she gasped. "The river! It—it's up? Is it?"

"Sure. Look out thar at the storm." Toby indicated the heavily falling snow. How yuh goin' to foller the trail? How yuh goin' to cross the crick—with her three feet deep an' quicksand on the bottom?" Here; you jist let me fix his arm. I can——"

"No," Mrs. Forbes spoke the word quietly but definitely. "His little arm would be stiff forever. I must get him to a doctor—quickly. Can't—can't you——"

Her voice trailed off, and her eyes closed.

Suddenly she appeared very beautiful to old Toby. He saw her as Sam Forbes saw her. She was beautiful—and good. Toby well knew she was an excellent wife and mother and that she had been the inspiration that had set Sam Forbes on the way to prosperity. Her fresh daintiness was in no manner frail, and for the moment old Toby saw her with the eyes of his youth. He rose to the occasion grandly.

"Shucks!" he stated recklessly. "I'll jist go myse'f—right now. Cain't pack li'l Sam along, but I shore kin ketch the boys in town, and one of them kin bring the doc out."

"But—" The woman gazed pityingly at the old man. "But—how are you going?"

"Ride," stated Toby Enfield positively. "Ride a hoss."

He hastened from the house and took the icy path to his own pleasant bunk in the lean-to off from his kitchen. He extracted therefrom his pair of high-heeled boots. He slipped off his heavy brogans and brightly stamped into the boots, pausing a moment to lay his leg out sidewise so he could admire the trim lines of the cowboy boot. He reveled in the feel of the leather against his thin shanks and the youthful appearance the costly boot gave to his feet. From beneath his tarp he drew his chaparejos with the silver conchas down the legs.

"Jingo! These ol' bull-pants seed some lively times—onc't," he muttered, drawing them on eagerly and with fumbling fingers buckling the carved leather belt.

Caressingly his gnarled fingers patted the pliant leather into shape against his legs. And, stooping, he put the heavy spurs to his boots.

"Well," he remarked, "got the lower end all dressed. Now——"

He tossed through his collection of garments. Apparently his wardrobe was more fitted for cooking than for riding. Mumbling, he went out into the snow and across to the bunk-house, where he chose a flamboyant jersey and a heavy mackinaw. Then, tying his wide hat down with a brilliant silk handkerchief knotted under his gray beard, he started for the corral. Suddenly he stopped.

"What in ——! Well, dag-gone! If they ain't went and turned the cavvy out into the big pasture. Course they would." Toby understood the situation. "They didn't figger on anybody needin' a hoss. Them broncs 're all way down in the roughs by now—never could ketch one of 'em afoot."

Old Toby pondered a moment. Then his face brightened.

"Sho, I'll jest drive the mules. Got to take 'em in anyhow."

And rapidly as possible in the fading light Toby harnessed the mules and hooked them up to the wagon. Pantingly he climbed to the seat, fumbled a moment with the lines and gave the word:

"Belle! Gyp!"

The mules started off at a swift trot, the empty wagon bumping over the frozen ground through the powdery covering of snow. Toby headed his four into the trail toward town.

"Lucky yuh know the way—I don't," he mumbled to the mules. "Git up thar, Tom! Mike! Stick to the trail—ef yuh kin."

The team warmed to their long trot. For some time Toby clung speechless to the seat as the wagon lurched joltingly along. His breath came unevenly, and his fingers chilled through his thick mittens.

"Mus' be about ha' pas' five," grunted Toby. "Hit'll be darker'n a bull's gullet in a hour. Git up, Tom! Gyp!"

The wagon hit a stone, sending the seat

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off its hooks, and it came down across the sideboards. Old Toby stood on the floor of the wagon-bed.

"Let 'er go. Don't need a seat, nohow. Git! Belle! Mike!"

Another bump and the seat flopped off over the side. Toby heard the crash as the heavy hind wheel rolled over it. For more than a half-hour the team trotted steadily. Then a snow-clogged windmill loomed beside the trail, weird in the swirling snow.

"That'll be the east. Well, that's five mile we made—an' still stickin' to the road." Toby glowed with pride. "Huh, only five to the river an' fo' into town! Shucks! This's easy. Mike! Tom! Git up!"

The chain traces clanked in unison.

Old Toby held to the lines and the sideboards and fought to keep his footing. The snow clung to the backs of the mules, and Toby could scarcely distinguish their shapes through the pelting flakes. To old Toby it seemed as if they had left the trail and were running in huge circles across the open prairie. Trustingly, he did not pull Only he urged them steadily:

"Mike! Belle!"

As they roared down the grade leading to the river crossing, Toby sighed relievedly.

"Them mules held the trail!" he breathed thankfully. Then he caught his breath. "Hoh, hoh!" he yelled and jammed the brake.

Little use for Toby to yell "hoh," for the mules were going to stop anyhow. Enfield could plainly hear the steady rush of the water as it swept across the flats bordering its shallow banks.

"Stopped jus' in time," he wheezed. "She's up an out on each side. Don't reckon she's over three feet deep at that." Toby paused to listen again. "Not so bad—but might be quickey."

PROFANELY he started the mules. Gingerly they stepped to the edge of the water. Belle, the near leader, snorted and swung sharply to the left. Gyp, her mate, reared. Old Toby tried to coax them into the water.

"Git on in thar," he yelled. "Er, by ol' Uncle Billy Judas, I'll cut yer heart out!"

Crashing his long whip on their backs, he managed to swing them into line. As soon as their feet came to the water's edge, they swerved away. "Hyar!" shrilled Toby in dismay. "Git in thar, yuh rebels, er I'll—" Toby yanked the extra chain from the jockey-box—"knock yuh across the crick."

Toby rattled the chain, and all the mules, recognizing the sound, reared but made no move to enter the treacherous current, which previous experiences had convinced them was fraught with quicksand, that faithless ingredient of so many shallow Western streams. Suddenly old Toby felt very old and very helpless; his chain dropped from his nerveless grasp, and, but for the single wild lunge made by the mules at the sound, Toby could hear nothing but the rush of the waters and the heavily falling snow. He had hoped to find the cowboys camped on this side of the stream.

"Guess they got acrost 'fore she riz," he observed, his last hope failing.

Presently he swung the mules and turned back up the little slope and drove a few yards off the trail over which they had just come. Toby got down from the wagon stiffly.

"Say! Which one of you mules was ever rode?" he demanded, going from one to the other and leaning some weight against their backs. Each in turn shied away or bucked warningly. Only Belle showed any signs of understanding the object—she merely humped her back and looked around testily.

"Never heerd of anybody ridin' yuh," Toby paused to comment. "Don't rec'lect seein' any saddle-marks on yuh, nuther. But, ef I cain't drive yuh acrost, mebby you'll go ef I ride yuh. Hit'd be turrible to git out in that quicksand with yuh all hooked up to the wagon, wouldn't it? But with yuh plumb loose—you kin make't, kain't yuh? Reckon I'll ride Belle, and the rest of yuh kin do as yuh durn please—foller er go back."

Fumblingly Toby unharnessed the mules, freed them and threw the harness into the wagon. As for Belle, he merely removed the traces and tightened the belly-band as much as she would permit and hooked her reins up over the hames. Leading her to the side of the wagon as if to feed her, Toby climbed to the hub and, taking firm grasp of the back-band, suddenly straddled her surprized back.

Action followed instantly. Belle wheeled from the wagon with a startled snort and bowed her head in a few stiff buck-jumps. Old Toby clutched the back-band desperately and gasped "Hoh, Belle," unabashed. But Belle didn't "Hoh." Instead, she

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humped herself in a series of bucking that shook old Toby to the very foundations.

"Ho—lee—smoke!" grunted Toby as the gray mule jarred through the atmosphere.

Each arching leap ended in a terrific jolt as Belle's rough-shod hoofs hit the frozen ground. The depth of snow did not seem to hamper her at all, and she kicked up the frozen particles in sheets of spray. The other three mules scattered at the beginning of the tow-row, but shortly they gathered in an interested group near the wagon.

Old Toby glimpsed their dark forms through the blinding snow and for a moment forgot that he was old and that he was in immediate peril of losing his hold on the back-band of a work mule. Old Toby forgot that little Sam lay moaning in the ranch-house, waiting for him to bring the doctor. Old Toby forgot these things. The present slipped from his mind; he was back in the wild prime of his youth; those dark forms behind him were some of the boys sitting their horses, watching him—Toby Enfield—ride the untamed outlaw. The spirit of his youth flooded his failing arteries, and he gloried in the feel of the tense muscled back heaving beneath him.

"Ye-e-eow!"

Toby's old voice quavered uncertainly against the lashing of the storm, but to his ears it was the ringing cry of old.

"Ye-e-e-eow!" he shrieked and dug his spurs recklessly against the flashing shoulders of the mule.

Belle had made her erratic way out into the trail and had started down the grade to the river as old Toby launched his unexpected frontal attack. The frightened animal attempted to wheel and flee back up the grade—but the roadway was narrow and the footing icy, and not even the rough shoes could hold the twisting mule to the road. So with a wild scramble Belle flopped on her side in the steep roadway.

"Halleluyer!" breathed Toby thankfully as he realized the situation. "Halleluyer! Here's where we git a chanct to rest."

Painfully releasing one cramped hand from the back-band, he reached out and caught the cheek of the bridle and yanked the mule's head up and back until she could neither struggle nor rise. His left leg was yet underneath the mule's heaving ribs, but he could feel no pain that might indicate an injury.

"Uh, huh, you're winded, too," Toby addressed Belle. "Reckon I kin show yuh who's boss yit. Yuh wall-eyed chromo of misery, think yuh kin buck Toby Enright off? Huh? Shucks! I was ridin' real buckers 'fore yuh was born."

After a brief "rest" Toby released Belle's bridle and grabbed the back-band.

"Git up," he ordered and spurred the heaving flank with his free foot. The mule staggered to her feet with Toby's lean limbs still clamped to her gray sides. Without offering to buck, the mule stepped quietly forward. "Huh! Got enough of 't, eh?" Toby exulted. "Yâh, now then—" he seized the reins—"git on down into the water, durn yuh, and swim er drown!"

Old Toby spurred relentlessly, and Belle stepped obediently to the water and waded in. The other mules, seeing their leader going in the direction of their Winter home at the alfalfa ranch, promptly fell in line, and together they followed into the current.

The roar of the storm was lost to Toby in the roar of the black waters beneath. Fearsomely he headed his mount into the middle of the stream; he gasped as the foam-flecked water splashed about his boots and the spray from the floundering mule splotched the leather of his chaps. Vainly old Toby strained his eyes for the opposite shore but could scarcely see past the flopping ears of his mount. The churning waters made him dizzy; twice the mule stepped in quicksands and struggled free in frightened plunges that would have unseated a less skilful rider.

The snow pelted down Toby's neck, and the wind whipped his hat and 'kerchief awry, but he dared not loosen his grasp on the back-band to remedy any of his discomforts. The other three mules wallowed single file, following Belle's footsteps unerringly. Then suddenly a huge shadow loomed ahead. Toby sighed relievedly; it was the mesquite thicket that marked the water's edge. Eagerly the mules splashed up out of the water and on to the frozen ground. Without hesitating, Belle swung into a trot. A few yards farther Toby recognized a cottonwood that grew beside the trail.

"Well, jingo, Belle, I got to hand 't to yuh," grinned Toby. "Yuh come out on the road."

Closing his eyes against the blizzard, he sagged tiredly on the mule's back and clutched the back-band grimly.

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IT WAS the blue blur of a street light in the swirl overhead that caused old Toby to look up in alarm.

"Thought the moon was fallin' down on on me—yeh," he grunted.

"Street lights, huh; must be cl'ar into town."

He twisted around and peered behind—three snow-flecked backs and three pairs of ears bobbed patiently in the rear.

"All here," observed Toby. "Hull fambly come into town."

For a moment he couldn't recall just how he happened to be out in the storm at this time of night. Suddenly he pulled up short—he remembered. He had to get a doctor. And that right quick. He reflected on the happenings of the day. Belle sidled around and switched uneasily; the others stopped surprized. Toby wondered vaguely where the doctor lived. Dispiritedly he dropped the rein, and Belle took up her trot.

Soon she turned up against a blank wall above which a single incandescent glowed weakly. Toby recognized the sliding door at the front of Blaney's livery. Numbly he slid to the ground and pounded at the door. A chair grated on the cement floor within. The door was slid back. Toby and the mules filed in. The air was warm and smelled pleasantly of hay. Stiffly Toby hobbled to a chair and slumped down. As the liveryman was attending to the desires of the mules, Toby's eyes roved to the wall.

"Telephone!" he shrilled. "Here, Blaney—jingo, ain't thet handy—come up and telephone fer a doctor—to come in a hurry."

"What's the matter? Yuh gettin' ready to croak, old-timer?"

"Naw; got to go to the Forbes ranch. Li'l' Sam's busted his elbow."

"Forbes, eh? Sure—I remember them mules now—Bar Z. Course."

"Yeh; he here now? Forbes in here today?"

"Nope, not today," replied Blaney, turning to the phone.

Old Enfield subsided into the chair and impatiently awaited the outcome of the telephone conversation.

"Doc says he'll be right down," presently announced the liveryman.

"Ain't Sam here? Ain't the boys in town with them steers?" demanded Toby desperately.

"Haven't seen anything of 'em," replied the other.

"Say, would yuh mind to telephone to the railroad corral and find out ef Sam Forbes is still thar?" Toby faltered.

"Sure thing, old-timer."

Again Blaney held a conversation and reported:

"Said Sam Forbes ain't there and hasn't been for a month. Was he going to ship something today?"

"Ain't got thar yit?" Toby's surprize was astonishing.

"Nope, not there yet."

"Huh."

Old Toby sat in placid meditation as the liveryman finished feeding. When he returned to the front, Toby was ready with another.

"'Bout what time yuh reckon 't is?" he asked.

Blaney glanced at his watch.

"9:30."

"Haf' pas' nine!" Toby was amazed. "Why, I'd thought hit was midnight at leas'. Lef' the ranch at haf' pas' five——"

Toby's gray head drooped lower and lower as he conned the problem. Presently he slept, exhausted.

How long he dozed he did not know, but all too soon he was awakened by a man's voice.

"Well, old-timer, here's the doctor."

"What? Oh, sure. 'Ju find Sam Forbes?" stammered Toby.

"Nope; guess he ain't in town."

Old Toby liked the capable appearance of the young physician Blaney had brought in. A clean-cut, athletic young man, apparently very interesting. Toby noticed, too, that he was warmly clad in furs. Sleepily old Toby eyed the physician.

"Well," briskly began the young doctor. "Forbes ranch, did you say? I'm ready any time you are."

"Me!" gasped old Toby. "Me! Why, I ain't goin' back out thar. Sam Forbes's supposed to take yuh——"

"But Sam Forbes ain't in town," interrupted Blaney.

Toby huddled silently in his chair, a pathetic old figure in a cowboy outfit.

"Tell me how to get there," urged the doctor kindly. "Which road to take."

"Sufferin' bullocks!" exclaimed Toby

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weakly. "They ain't none. She's nothin' but a snow-bank and a ragin' torrent. I'd never made hit here if 't hadn't been fer the mule knowin' the way."

"Then let me ride the mule back," said the doctor. "Is it far?"

"All right," smiled old Toby. "You kin ride the mule."

The inherent desire of the rangeman to see a "dude" get "busted" got the better of old Toby for a moment. Then came the recollection of little Sam tossing in pain in the long living-room out at the ranch and his little mother waiting—waiting . . . .

"How are yuh fer a rider, son?"

"Oh, I've never ridden a great deal," the other replied. "But I wouldn't object to riding a mule."

"Yuh would this one. Say—" Toby addressed the liveryman—"yuh got any riders that'll ride my mule and lead the doc to the ranch?"

"Afraid not—not on this kind of a night. I can see, though, if it'll help Forbes."

"Take long?" grumbled Toby.

"Mebby. Have to hunt one up; don't know just——"

"Saddle a hoss—a big one—for the doc."

Toby, for the second time that day, felt young again. Then, too, he wanted to show this young, capable doctor what a real man could do.

"Saddle that gray mule for me!" he ordered grandly.

Old Enfield selected an ornamental stock-saddle from the stable's collection and carefully adjusted the stirrups while the liveryman saddled a muscled bay for the physician. Toby let Blaney saddle the mule and grinned widely as that gentleman struggled with the tough beast.

"Gosh, she's a kicker—an' a bucker, too." Blaney was breathless from his battle. "'Ju say you—rode that thing bareback!"

"Sure did," quavered Toby. "Shucks! She's easy. Why, when I was yore age, I was ridin' bad hosses fer a livin'. Bustin' wild ones is my trade. Yeh. An', when I was in my forty-fifth year, I won the Worl' Champion Bronc Ridin' at the San Angelo Fair——"

Old Toby would have told all about his triumphs had not the young doctor awkwardly mounted his big bay and mentioned the need for haste.

"Sure, sure," assented Toby. "Here, Blaney. You shove them portals wide open and come back an' swing on this mule's head."

The liveryman did as Toby directed, and the old man scrambled to the saddle. He jammed his boots into the stirrups until the high heel struck the tread and settled himself carefully. The jingle of his spurs and the creak of saddle-leather sent the thinner blood of old age pounding through his veins. The tense arching of his mount and the vicious switching of her tail augured ill for Mr. Enfield. The liveryman attempted to interfere.

"Say, old-timer, jus' let me top her off fer yuh," Blaney began. "Better let me——"

"Let 'er go!" Toby Enfield spoke.

Blaney loosed his hold and leaped aside.

"Let 'er buck!" he whooped.

Belle was loath to leave her companions and the comforts of the Palace Livery and attempted to wheel and dash back to the stall. Leaping in front, Blaney wildly waved his arms.

"Hi-yah! Hyah! Git outa here!" he yipped and threw his hat into her face.

As she turned again toward the open doorway, old Toby jabbed his spurs against her flanks. The mule shot across the sidewalk in two liver-lifting jumps. Once in the street, Toby swung on the reins and headed her in the right direction.

"Foller me!" he squawked as Belle put down her head and launched into a spasm of vicious pitching.

The young doctor sat his horse a moment, petrified with astonishment. Then, spurring his mount, he galloped stiffly after.

The liveryman stood bareheaded in the driving snow and gazed after Toby's figure bobbing eccentrically on the gray mule in the eery glow from the snow-bound arc-lights overhead.

"Well, I'll be eternally dad dinged!" he ejaculated finally as the figures disappeared in the coils of the blizzard. "Can he ride? Tell a worl' that old relic could ride a hungry polar bear past a butcher shop."

Old Toby's hand had long since found the saddle-horn, and he was holding on with a marvelous grip. Each jolt of the solid mule racked him fearfully. If it hadn't been that he had an onlooker—the young doctor behind—old Toby couldn't have had the heart to stay with it. He yanked with all his failing strength at the bit, but Belle simply wouldn't quit until she was completely satisfied she couldn't dislodge the

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rider. Finally she quit as suddenly as she began and settled into a steady trot—her favorite gait.

FOR a long time Toby's head swam with dizziness, and his stomach felt strangely empty. His breath came in gasps, and his heart pounded deafeningly as he bent bravely against the wind and urged the mule onward into the teeth of the ravening cold. They had almost reached the river before Toby pulled alongside the young doctor.

"Rode 'er in bareback." Toby leaned over and lifted his voice to a quavering screech. "Yeh, bareback—and I had to knock 'er down onct to make 'er stop pitchin'—spurred 'er clean up on the jawbone to do hit. Rode 'er plumb to the ground."

The sweeping wind buffeted his voice so Toby could not attempt more, but his whole being warmed at the physician's sincere admiration.

"That was a wonderful ride you made just now," the young doctor had shouted. "I've never seen a younger man do better." Which was true enough.

They plowed through the darkness in silence, their heads bowed against the dashing snow, their extremities aching with the bitter cold. Again old Toby reined close to his companion.

"Young feller," Toby yelled, "hold yore hoss smack behind mine. We're at the river. No matter which way yuh think we're goin', stick right thar, an' we'll git through!" Toby added "mebbe" under his breath.

The other nodded.

Toby swung the mule into the water and grasped the saddle-horn with both hands. Silently he prayed for deliverance as he headed into the black terror sweeping before him. The mule took a headlong course that seemed to zigzag through the angry waters, but Toby left the reins alone and offered up fervent prayers. Only once did he look back; the doctor was close behind, his face showing strangely white behind the glow of his rapidly puffing cigar. Toby grinned and felt a trifle less afraid. When they finally splashed up the opposite bank, Toby was not relieved until the mule swung up a grade and came to a halt beside the wagon—a mere hump of snow. Gently Toby pulled Belle's head in the direction of the ranch and urged her on.

"Good ol' hoss," he murmured and patted her thick neck. "I knowed yuh'd make it."

Belle took up the long trot. The doctor pounded along close in the rear.

WHEN they reached the ranch, old Toby saw to it that the doctor first tumbled out a bale of hay for each of their mounts. Then he pointed to the ranch-house, where a light showed wanly from a window.

"Mrs. Forbes settin' up with li'l Sam," he explained weakly.

Then he tottered into the cook-house and fell across his bunk.

Hours later he was awakened by the scrape of the cook-house door being pried open and the stamping of high-heeled boots and the ringing of spurs.

"Haw! The ol' scoundrel's asleep, betcha dollar," came Buckey's penetrating voice. "By gosh, Toby, we ain't had nothin' to eat since we left yesterday. Forbes was skeered to tackle the river in the storm; so we drifted 'em down to Tracey's pasture—never lost a one. Wasn't nobody there ner nothin' to eat. We toughed it out all night, and now we're starvin' to death."

"Hey, Uncle Toby: Ten o'clock. Time to git up," yelled Tiff Mason, advancing toward the niche where old Toby sprawled upon his bunk. "Say, wasn't that some storm! Guess that was a night you wouldn't want to be out in, eh? We was——"

TWENTY minutes later Sam Forbes and the young physician came down to the cook-house, where the boys were fixing up choice things for Uncle Toby to eat. Forbes shook Toby's hand heartily.

"Well, Enfield—" Forbes spoke feelingly—"I'm beginning to think we need somebody to sort of stick around this ranch steady—so there'll be a man around the place all the time, and if you wouldn't mind, I'd like you to take the job. Does it suit you?"

"Suits me," nodded old Toby happily. "Suits me plumb down to the ground and sidewise."

Despite the fact that all the boys were present and that he had just established himself as an all-around bronc-twister and daredevil, old Toby Enfield wept shamelessly.

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The DOUBLE-CROSSING of DOBIE

by W. C. Tuttle

Author of "The Domestication of Dobie," "The Color of His Boots," etc.

Pyrites, June 1.

DEAR HANK:

I reckon you'll look at the top of this letter and say you'll bet that Dobie is in a business in Pyrites, but, Hank, you are mistaken. If you know what rusticating is, that's me. This town is only about seven miles from Mesquite City, Hank, but that don't say much for the place if you have to run all them seven miles in the dark.

Hank, I never did have no luck. If the Government throwed the mint open for settlement, I'd be in jail. When they was passing the luck around, I must 'a' been at the foot of the table and got a piece that nobody else had the stummick to tackle.

Remember the night that I got married, Hank? I ain't referring to the boot with a spur on it that hit me on the head, but to the incident where "Shorty" Wells got too enthusiastic and hived seven shot into my leg. Remember what the preacher said? He said, "That is unfortunate." It sure was, Hank. If Shorty had only held about four feet higher—oh, boy! Well, there ain't no use yelling and hollering.

I ain't kicking about anything I'm to blame for; so you don't hear a yip out of me about my wife Emmeline. Of course, I thought the sun was rising for me when I married her, Hank, but I must have been facing the west. I don't mind saying to you, Hank, that I made a mistake, and that don't say nothing about the immensity of said mistake. Emmeline ain't so bad all by herself, but she's got some blood-relatives that mention Captain Kidd in their evening prayers. I'm only a puncher, Hank, but I'm a honest one.

Remember me writing you about Uncle Gabe Galesburg, Emmeline's uncle? Hank, all that *hombre* needs is a knife in his teeth and a muzzle-loading pistol in his hand and a gang-plank to make folks walk down, and he's got Captain Kidd, Captain John Smith and so forth pulling leather and looking for a soft spot to light on to.

He's meaner than a loco longhorn, Hank, but he's got one redeeming feature. He recognizes brains and ability when he meets them. He bought out the Manzanita stage line and took me in cahoots with him, which is as should be. He naturally made me the whole cheese, but, to hear him talk, you'd think he owned it lock, stock and barrel.

He gets so that he's the fly in my axle-grease, but, as I don't make it a practise to fight with my relatives, I keeps my face shut. Of course, he ain't no relative of mine, except by marriage, but ignorance of the

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law ain't no excuse. I got mad one morning, Hank, and I sure hopped him plenty.

"How comes it that I don't handle nothing but a pair of lines around here when I'm supposed to be manager?" I asks. "Am I or am I not what I appear to be?"

Hank, you know I ain't nobody to beat around about a thing. I go after action, and, when I pinned him down to it, he says:

"You are, Dobie. Anybody can see that."

"Well," says I, "when anybody comes in here and asks for the boss, you always speak up and ask what they want. Are you deaf?"

"Dobie," says he, "I don't wish to overwork you. I don't want Emmeline's husband to break down physically. I think a lot of her, Dobie."

"Which proves that blood is thicker than water," says I. "But I don't want you for a minute to think that I'm water. I'm blood, iron and bone."

"I'll pass," says he, "I don't know much about corpuscles nor mineralogy, but I confirms part of your statement."

Get the idea, Hank? Pin 'em down to facts. I wasn't through with him yet, as you may see; so I continues like this:

"Then how comes it that I don't know more about the business? Half the time I don't know whether the load I'm hauling is worth two-bits or a million dollars."

"Well," says he, "you can figure it like this, Dobie: if it was only worth two-bits, I'd close up business and use the horses for bear-bait, and, if it was worth a million dollars, I'd put you in jail and drive it myself."

I'm just telling you this, Hank, so you can see the kind of a *hombre* I've got for a pardner. Did you ever know a feller by the name of "Devil Creek" Davis? I asked him if he knowed you, and he said—

"The feller that everybody said stole the spotted calf from the Widder Heffliger over in Smoky Springs?"

I said—

"Yes, that's him."

Did you, Hank? I couldn't say no, 'cause I didn't know, and it makes it a lot better when you've got mutual friends. When was you over in Smoky Springs, Hank?

Devil Creek is a queer sort of a *hombre*. He don't have much to say, but he don't miss much of what's going on around here. I don't mean here, Hank, but over in Mesquite. He drifts into Mesquite on a pinto bronc, and me and him gets friendly.

Uncle Gabe stops using guards on the stage, 'cause they were an extra expense, and he said that, if we ain't got no shotgunman aboard, nobody will think we're carrying anything worth much, like seed catalogs. There has been a lot of holding up going on around this neck of the woods, and all the time I'm afraid I'll get held up next.

One morning I'm due to go out, and uncle is in a big hurry to go over to see a feller on the forks of Gila Creek. When he pulled out on his bronc, me and Devil Creek went up to the Three Star saloon, while the horses finished breakfast.

Hank, you've played Black Jack, ain't you? I laid down four-bits in the game. I got a ace and a jack, which is a "natural," and then I let the dollar ride. I got a six and a five and drawed a ten and won again. Hank, I know I can bust any old game if I stop to figure out plays, but I can't spare the time; so I says—

"I reckon I've got to go."

Devil Creek says—

"When your luck is like that?"

And I says—

"I've got to take out that stage."

"Soapy" Slade, the dealer, spoke up—

"I'd hate to own a business that can't take care of itself long enough to let me play a little."

Hank, I got a fine idea right there, like I mostly always do; so I says:

"Devil Creek, I deputize you to take that stage to Manzanita. You ain't got nothing to do, have you?"

Well, he didn't; so I gave him my gun and told him to go to it, 'cause the stage is all loaded and the team is filled with hay. I made up my mind right there, Hank, that I'd have a hundred or nothing out of that check-rack, and I was right. I only had fourteen dollars to lose, anyway; so I wasn't as bad off as if I was flush.

I went down to the stage office, and pretty soon a feller comes out of the barn and slips into the office. He's a woolly-looking pelican, Hank. He says to me:

"Gave my bronc a feed in the barn. Who are you?"

"I'm the owner of the hay," says I, and he laid a dollar on the table.

"Been any strangers around here lately?"

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he asks, and I says no—nobody except Devil Creek.

"Ain't seen nothing of a gent about five feet ten inches tall, sandy-haired, crooked nose and one squinty eye?"

"Mister," says I, "I ain't superstitious noways, but, if I do, I'll sure make it a point to kill him."

"Good!" says he. "He needs it. That's a description of 'Dynamite' Carson. He's the *hombre* what held up the U. P. Railroad a couple of weeks ago and punctured the sheriff's earthly envelope. Worth a thousand, dead or alive, and I'd advise you to take no chances on making him a prisoner."

Well, Hank, he fed his bronc and then drifted away. I asked him what was his business, and he said that detectives ain't in the habit of coming into a country and announcing their business.

Hank, after he's gone, I set right down and figured out what I could do with that thousand dollars. The description covers Devil Creek to a gnat's appendix. I'm still figuring when the door opens and in comes Uncle Gabe. He looks at me foolish-like and then snorts:

"Dobie, what in —— does this mean? Where is that stage?"

I looks at my watch, and says—

"Ought to be about to Cinnamon Creek."

Hank, that uncle of my wife is too excitable. I'm always as placid as a buffalo-waller, and, when he rears straight up, I just smile.

"Go on!" he whoops. "What's the big idea, and who's driving?"

"Cool off," I advises him; "I was took sick at the last minute, and I hired Devil Creek to drive it for me. I had cramps."

He snaps his fingers a few times and takes a chew.

"Cramps, eh?" says he. "Who is this Devil Creek person?"

"Well, somebody had to take it out, didn't they?" I asks. "I was suffering something awful, and I grabbed at the first straw. What's the use of being a manager if you can't hire a man in a emergency?"

"I asked you what you knew about him?" he reminds me.

I rolls a smoke and pats myself on the chest. I've decided to let him in on that thousand; maybe the shock will kill him.

"Let me tell you something that will make you glad that you've got me for a manager. This here Devil Creek ain't him at all—he's Dynamite Carson."

"Go ahead," says he; "I don't know either of them."

"Dynamite Carson held up the U. P. Railroad a couple of weeks ago, and there's a thousand dollars reward for him. Devil Creek ain't Devil Creek at all—he's Dynamite. *Sabe?* When he drives back here, we'll put the deadwood on him and cash in on that thousand. What do you know about that?"

Well, Hank, there ain't nothing startling going on around here to write about. I ain't seen my wife for several days, 'cause I've been here that long and she ain't here, but likely I wouldn't know her if I met her on the street on account of my eyes. Her uncle chased me all the way over here from Mesquite, and since then I ain't been physically able to eat much. It's hard to eat when you can't hardly see what you're eating and, when you do, you ain't got no teeth left to masticate with.

Wish I was back with the Cross in a Box outfit. I ain't asking for no money, Hank, but a feller has current expenses what has to be met if he wants to keep his credit well. Write soon and remember that money speaks as loud as a long letter.

Y'rs resp'y and affectionately,

DOBIE DALTON.

P. S. Hank, I forgot to tell you that there was four thousand dollars in money in the express box on that stage, and I ain't never seen where the sheriff has caught Devil Creek or found the stage. Uncle said he had a good notion to bend me all out of shape, and he meant it—'cause he did.

Mesquite City, June 10.

DEAR HANK:

Honest to grandma, Hank, you ain't got no cause to get sore. What do I care whether you stole a calf or not? You say no, and that settles it with me. Why talk about it any more?

I don't care if you did steal it, Hank. It don't make me no difference, Hank, 'cause, when I'm a friend, I'm a friend. I said yes, just like you would if a man asked you if you knowed the Boer War was over. You don't know the Boers ever had a war, Hank, but you say yes to keep out of a argument. What's a calf, anyway, Hank? If you want to steal from a widder woman, it's your business. Of course, some folks would turn

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up their nose at you if they knowed you done that, but with me it don't make no difference.

If you stole it to try and get a start in the cow business, Hank, I'm for you, but, if you stole it to get a poker stake from, I don't approve—unless it was a game among friends. *Sabe?*

I wish I'd 'a' kept my mouth shut about it, 'cause you crabbed all the way through your letter and never mentioned money. If you was so interested in calves, Hank, you might 'a' shipped it to me. Calves bring good money here. Well, Hank, I thought I'd write so you would know I am back in Mesquite. The old town looks just the same. Me and Emmeline ain't had no good chance to become reconciled as yet, and it seems to me that, when a dog is down, they all tries to kick him.

I tries to talk things over with her uncle, but he ain't the kind of a *hombre* what listens to reason. I done my best, Hank, and that's all any man can do. I says to him—

"You ain't playing square with me and the public when you kicks me out of my business like this," says I.

All he can say is—

"Dobie, I'd be doing the fair thing to the public if I kicked you so hard that when your soul and body met they'd have to be introduced."

Uncle Gabe is emotional, Hank, and emotion is a feerocious form of insanity. He told me to go out and find that money and stage that I gave away and then he might get fond of me again.

What can I do, Hank? I ain't no palmist what can look in my hand and see where Devil Creek left that stage. I ain't seen my wife for a long time; so I went up to the house and knocked on the door. I says to her—

"Darling, can I walk in?"

"You ain't crippled in the legs are you, Dobie?" she asks, and I can see that she has been told things that were better left unsaid. I went into the parlor and picked up the family album what contains the photygraphs. "Did you come to see the pictures?" she asks. "If that's all you wanted, you can take the album with you."

"Emmie, love," says I, "you ain't likely heard my side of the story yet."

"One side is sufficient," says she. "I wish I'd never seen you."

"Well," says I, "I knowed you'd take another's word for it; so I won't defend myself from unjust canard. You are tired of seeing my familiar face around here; so I won't darken your door with it again until I can come back a vindicated hero. I may never see you again, woman; so fare thee a fond fare-thee-well."

Hank, I had a lump as big as a door-knob in my throat when I said them words, but she acts cold as a rock when she says:

"Dobie, you've changed your face so many times lately that I ain't got a chance to get tired of any one of them. I hope for your sake that you will either brace up and be a man or find somebody you can whip."

Hank, I'm strong when it comes to facing the bitter world or my relatives by marriage, but I sure sheds tears when I left my sweet wife. I went down to the Palace saloon, and I runs across "Blizzard" Hughes. Bliz is filling his skin with hooch and his soul with misery. He sobs on my shoulder and buys a drink. I tells him my troubles, and we cries together.

"Tell you what I'll do," sobs Bliz; "I got a burro, and you can have him if you want him."

I kissed Bliz on the nose and asks him what I'm going to do, now that I own a burro.

"Sympathy," says he. "Nothing like hitting a woman's heart-strings. I'll bring that jassack up to Galesburg's gate, and we'll pack him up. *Sabe?* You wife will realize that she's going to lose you, Dobie, and it will twang upon her heart-strings until she cometh to your loving arms. You get the plunder together, and I'll do the rest."

Hank, that was one hyiu idea. I got my stuff together, and, when I got up to the gate, I finds Bliz and the burro and a lot of innocent bystanders. That burro is the picture of misery, having both ears broken and hanging down like a weeping willer.

Me and Bliz shakes hands solemn-like, and then he introduces me to all the rest of the mourners. They all sympathizes with me over my troubles and expresses grief at losing me so soon, and then me and Bliz starts to pack up.

We ain't got much to pack, but we sure packs it well. I reckon we're there for over an hour. Emmeline don't show up, but I can feel that she's looking on from one of the windows. After we're all through, Bliz says to me:

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"Dobie, she's likely too proud to come out here before all this audience; so you better go up to the house to see her. But before you go, I want to say good-by. I must say it before you start, 'cause it would be too hard for me to wait until you pull out. Good-by, Dobie, and good luck."

Me and Bliz cries a little when we shakes hands, and the rest of the crowd takes off their hats respectful-like. Then I went up to the house. I hammers on the door for about five minutes before I gets a reply, and then Aunt Phoebe comes to the door.

"Emmeline?" says I in undertaking tones.

She says—

"Emmeline is taking a nap, and I will call her."

In about ten minutes Emmeline came to the door, and I says—

"Darling, I am going away."

"Do you want to take the photygraph album with you Dobie?" she asks.

"Look upon me, wife," says I sad-like. "This may be the last time you will ever look upon my face." I points at the packed burro and says: "Yonder stands my last friend, which will stick through thick and thin.

"Yes?" says she. "Maybe the association will do you good. Latch the gate as you go out, please." And then she shut the door.

Hank, I leave it to you if that ain't a awful way to act in a case like that. I put all the misery I can into my walk, and, when I got to the gate, I finds her uncle with the rest of the crowd.

"Some jack," says he. "Where you going, Dobie—flea-hunting?"

"He may be full of fleas, but he's my friend," says I. "He ain't the kind what will quit you in the days of tribulations. He'll stick."

"Where you going?" he asks, and I says:

"I'm going to vindicate myself. It may take years, and it may take longer; but, when I come back, you will be proud of me. I say good-by to all of you and fare-thee-well."

I picks up that rope, turns my face away from all that I love and went—as far as the end of the rope.

"Yes," says Uncle Gabe, "he'll stick. There ain't no argument."

Hank, do you think I could budge that animal? You're wrong if you think so. That moth-eaten cross between an overgrown jack-rabbit and a paryletic wouldn't move a peg. I walked around him and yanked, and then I walked around the other way and yanked, but the best I could do was to make him wink one eye.

"You think I can't make him go?" I asks Uncle Gabe, who stands there grinning his fool face off.

"No," says he. "Far be it from me to prophesy anything about you or a burro. He must like the place."

"If he knowed you as well as I do, I'd 'a' had to hog-tie him to make him stay here this long," says I.

"Mules have ears," says somebody. "Maybe he heard something about you."

Hank, that made me mad. I'm slow to anger, as you know, but I walked right up and kicked that miserable specimen in the ribs.

"Get going!" I yelps in my strong voice, and then I places both of my brawny hands upon his rump and shoved hard.

I heard later that I moved the burro a little. I'm awful strong, Hank, and it has to be a heavy thing if I can't move it.

Now I am up against it, Hank. Before he'd fix me up, I had to promise the doctor that I could get you to pay the bill. I told him to send you the bill. What could I do? A feller can't run around and tend to business with three broken ribs dangling around inside of him, can he? There is a lot of ways to look at a situation like that, and I hope you pick out a good one. If you think it will be over twenty-five dollars, you can send me that much and play safe. I hope these few lines will reach you in better shape than I am, and I wish to remain,

Y'rs obediently,

DOBIE.

P. S. That burro stayed there until the next day at noon. Nobody but Bliz can make it lead. One calf don't make a rustler; so forget it.

Mesquite, June 16.

DEAR HANK:

Before I go any further, I'd like to tell you that I came very near being financially fixed so that I'd never have to insinuate to you again that I need money.

I never knowed one little spotted calf to cause so much argument, Hank. You act like I was going to tell the sheriff. I don't care if you never heard of the Widder Heffliger or never expect to. I never did either until Devil Creek spoke of her.

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Hank, you're an awful josher when you say that you wouldn't pay twenty-five dollars for all my ribs if they'd hang all the rest of my bones on for good measure. I ain't asking you to buy my bones, but I sure do need money for repairs.

Hank, did you ever hear of "Bedrock" Bump? Sounds like falling down a prospect hole and is about as bad, but it's a man's name. Just a old prospector, Hank, but I don't turn up my nose at no man just as long as his occupation is honest.

Bedrock's troubles is financial like mine. He's got a prospect and a prospective buyer, but the buyer knows something about minerals, and Bedrock ain't got no mineral to show him. I know a lot about mines, Hank, like I do about mostly everything else; so I asks Bedrock what kind of a mine he's got.

"Well," says he, "it's been assayed for everything except gold and ain't showed a trace; so we'll call it a gold-mine. It's reasonable to suppose it must be some kind of a mine, or it wouldn't be nothing but a hole."

He introduces me to this mine-buyer, whose name is Archibald. I wishes him many happy dividends, and he treats us internally.

Me and Bedrock gets into executive session on the proposition and talks it over.

"If I wasn't a honest man, I could sell this mine, and then me and you could live easy," says he.

I says—

"Honesty should be tinged with a certain degree of self-preservation."

I has a hard time getting him to see things my way, Hank. Not that I had a dishonest thought, though, 'cause you know the latter-day Daltons are as honest as a hot day is long.

He asks me if I knowed what "salting" meant, and I told him I knowed a plenty about it. There ain't no place where a feller can buy gold; so he went over to the bank and got fifty dollars worth of five-dollar gold-pieces.

"Dobie," says he, handing me the money, "use your own judgment but be discreet. *Sabe?* Don't make her look too rich nor too poor. Use your own judgment."

I sure did, Hank. It don't do to make it too rich; so I held out twenty-five dollars for a rainy day. Not that I intended to keep any of it, but suppose anything should happen to Bedrock, who ain't got no will made out nor nothing! Where would I be for all my trouble? I've been in business long enough to see that a man has got to look out for his own interests or lose trade.

Well, Hank, I fixed that mine and then notifies Bedrock. We has a drink while we waits for Archibald to show up.

"Dobie," says he, "this may not be knowed as a honest way to do business, but I ain't done no wrong. I handed you the gold, and, if you want to plant it on my property, it ain't no funeral of mine, is it?"

"No," says I, "and it don't reflect on my character either. It ain't me what is selling the mine. If I wants to cache gold, that's my business, and I never showed him the place. It's just a coincidence, Bedrock."

Me and Bedrock has clean minds over it, which is a rare thing for men who sell mines. Bedrock met Archibald, and I went over to the Palace and horned into a poker game.

See how the deal was going, Hank? Here was a chance to clean up all my debts and not worry you any more about finances. I sure felt so good that, when I got cleaned like a shirt in a Chink laundry, I didn't even have remorse. When you got a lot of money coming, you don't worry about a few measly dollars. Well, I set there for quite a long time watching the game, when all to once I seen Bedrock stick his head into the back door and motion for me to come out. I follers him out back of a corral.

"Quick work," says I. "How much do I get out of the deal, and how soon do I get what is coming to me, Bedrock?"

He takes off his coat and vest and hangs them over the corral fence. Then he spits on his hands and says:

"Dobie, you're going to get yours right now. I ain't a young man any more, and I'm a heap stiff in the knees, but I sure am willing to fight any man what ain't got no more sense than to stick five-dollar gold-pieces into the cracks in a mine and expect a man to buy the property. First I'm going to lick you, and then I'm going to make you give back the money you held out on me."

Well, Hank, there ain't much going on around here. Bedrock was wrong about getting that money back, 'cause I lost it in that poker game. I'm glad, too, because he lied to me about his physical condition when he said he was stiff.

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A dollar ain't much, Hank, but a few of them would feel good around me right now. There's a sign on the wall of the post-office what says that a money-order is the proper way to send same. Remind me to all the boys and tell them I'm doing the same as usual.

Y'rs obediently and sincerely,
DOBIE DALTON.

Mesquite, June 20.

DEAR HANK:

I ain't heard a word from you since the last time; so I take my pen in hand to let you know that, if you sent any money to me, we're both loser, 'cause it ain't never came as yet.

Also I write to let you know that I ain't had no streak of luck lately. I went up to have a talk with Emmeline, but her uncle was there—which hampers conversation to some extent. I says to her:

"Emmeline, when you married me, you took me for better or worse, didn't you?"

She says—

"The latter, Dobie."

"Well, why don't you get us a divorce if you don't care to live with me?" I asks.

Then uncle has to put in his oar like this:

"I advised her not to. A divorce costs money, Dobie, and I figured that after a while you'd either change your ways or somebody would kill you. You can't expect her to live with you while you act like you have since you came here."

"I ain't had a fair chance," says I. "All I need is a chance. When do I take up the reins of business again, uncle?"

"The business is going good now," says he, "and I can't take a chance on changing my luck, Mister Joner."

"That's the second time you've called me by that name," says I. "I ain't traveling under no alias, and you know what my right name is."

"I'm glad to hear there is something right about you," says he, and the conversation lags to such an extent that I takes my hat and goes away.

When I got down-town, I runs across Jim Scott, who punches cows for the Bridle Bit outfit, and I admires his pinto bronc.

"Nice little painted horse," says Jim. "Try him, Dobie."

I ain't had a good bronc between my knees for a long time, Hank, and I sure feel homelike. I rode off down the road a ways, and all to once I got to thinking. You know how my mind grasps at chances, Hank, and all to once this strikes me: why not try to find that lost stage?

I ain't got a thing but my bare hands to cope with, Hank, but I've got mostly all of them skinned when it comes to daring. I swings off across the hills and swings in around the head of Cinnabar Creek. I drifts to the top of a high bluff, and below me on the creek I can see a ranch-house. Now, Hank, you can believe me if you want to, but out in front of that house is that lost stage with them four broncs hitched.

It sure proves that brains count. I slips off that pinto and sneaks down the hill. There ain't a soul in sight, and, as I said before, I ain't got no gun; so I sneaks around the corner of that house, hops aboard, kicks off the brake and throws the whip into them animals.

If you asks me, Hank, I can tell you that we drifted away from there. I looks back and sees two men come to the door, and, just as we dips over the ridge, a bullet comes along and hives up in the back of the seat. To be a hero you got to take chances, Hank; so I slips the leathe to them broncs, and we sure covered territory.

Devil Creek must have had a pardner, 'cause it ain't long until I sees two men on horses fogging along my back trail. I'm as good a driver as ever yanked a line, but it don't make no never-mind how good a driver you are, Hank; you can't outrun a saddle-horse.

I got every bit of speed them four buzzard-heads owned, but I can see it's a losing proposition.

"Dobie," says I, "you ain't going to let them get this stage back again, are you?" And then I answers myself, "No, a thousand times—no!"

Maybe the idea ain't so good as some I've thought out in my time, Hank, but you got to figure that most of my time is taken up trying to keep on the road.

I lopes them animals down to the bank of Trail River, which is carrying a Spring flood. I stops at the edge, hops out and unhooks the wheelers. Then I takes a rope and fastens it to the doubletree and to the end of the tongue, with a half-hitch, and then I hops on to a wheeler and swings the whole outfit into the river.

Hank, I sure took a chance, but you

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can't win unless you do. And in about a second later we're all going down the river like a steamboat. When we drifted out to the middle, I yanked on that rope, which cut the stage loose. The last I seen of that vehicle, it was hooked up with a cottonwood snag, and the whole works was drifting towards the Pacific Ocean.

I figured on throwing the harness off that wheeler and riding him to Mesquite and herding the rest of the team. See the idea? Well, Hank, that wheeler was a plumb docile animal in the water, but, when he got his hoofs on dry ground, he sure changed ends with me a plenty. I lit flat on my back in the sand and didn't get up until a bullet comes along and made me forget physical discomforts.

Hank, I sure had a time dodging them outlaws, but I finally crawls into an old wolf den, and they missed me. I thought they had me once, Hank, 'cause I hears a shot real close, and the next minute a whole bunch of young coyotes whoops into that hole and hives up in my bosom.

Hank, I hears voices outside for a while, and them pups accepts me as part of the scenery. But pretty soon I has to sneeze. Never sneeze in the midst of coyote pups, Hank. I got bit in seventeen places to once. Them little whelps wasn't satisfied with one bite, Hank. They tries it over and over again until I gets disgusted and hauls myself out of there and right into the face of the old lady.

She takes one look, yips like the devil had her and fades out of there, while I shakes her offsprings loose and went the other way.

Then I has to walk back to Mesquite, Hank. I made it by ten o'clock that night, which is awful good time for a man on foot with his hide full of teeth-marks. Also I made it without a whimper, Hank. When you comes to look at it, Hank, I must be a wonderful constitution to stand so much. Naturally I wants to break the news to Emmeline first of all; so I limps up to the house and finds her setting on the porch.

She looks me over in the light from the window and says—

"Dobie, you look like you had been some place and hadn't come back yet."

"Darling," says I, "I am vindicated. I found the lost stage."

She looks at me amazed-like, Hank, for a minute, and then she gasps—

"Honestly?"

"Well," says I dignified-like, "if you mean that I done any crooked work, I can say no. I want you to be with me when I breaks the news to your uncle."

"He's still at the office," says she. "I don't know what he'll think, but I'll bet he will be surprized."

"I don't care much about what he thinks," says I. "All I wish is to be vindicated before you. I don't need to work for him, Emmeline. There is a plenty of openings for brains, and soon I'll be able to pay him off for your board and room, and then we'll be happy once again."

We walks in on uncle, who is burning the midnight oil, and he looks at us surprized-like.

"I've got some good news for you," says I. "Take it or leave it. You think I ain't much, but I'm here to prove that you're wrong. Today I took that stage away from where Devil Creek had it, and I fought my way against overpowering odds back to Trail River, where I was forced to ditch her in the river. Then I turned them broncs loose, and I done it all alone, too. If I'd had a gun I'd 'a' brought them outlaws to judgment, but, as it was, I thought more about saving your property than I did about personal gains. What do you think of your nephew-in-law?"

Hank, the next time I aim to commit matrimony, I'm going to court the relatives. I often wonder why they put mental defectives into the loco-lodge and let demons like Gabe Galesburg roam at large and prey on society.

Hank, you've heard about a feller getting beat until he's black and blue, ain't you? Well, I've got that beat. Uncle Gabe beat me until I'm calloused. I ain't so proud that I won't take a job punching cows, just because I've been identified with a business. I don't look down on no profession that is honest toil, and I'd be a valuable man to hire, as I can do anything that anybody can do and likely do it better than they can. Hoping to get a money-order soon, I beg to remain your obedient servant.

DOBIE DALTON.

P. S. I forgot to tell you that it wasn't Devil Creek that chased me. Old "Harmony" Hanson told uncle all about it before I got back that night. It seems that there was a sick man up there at that ranch, and the stage was up there to haul

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him out. Of course they blame me, but they ought to be glad he wasn't in the stage.

Mesquite, June 25.

DEAR HANK:

I didn't think for a minute that you stole that calf. I didn't intimate no such a thing. Don't you worry, Hank, I ain't going to tell no sheriff, 'cause I ain't got nothing but Devil Creek's word for it, and I'd as soon take your word as I would his. If the sheriff finds it out and asks me, I'll say I just heard it—that's all.

There ain't nobody to prove it, Hank, unless the widder saw you take it, which is careless if so. I'd advise you to forget it, Hank, as it must be quite a cow by this time—or dead and the money spent.

I spoke about you paying for my ribs, but you ignores same; so will say just let 'em drop. Nobody around here respects a cripple, anyway. Anything you can send me will be duly acknowledged at once, also appreciated according to size.

In my last letter I didn't tell you everything; so I will tell you what happened later on.

When uncle got through with me, I found myself on the ground with my feet in the horse-trough. It is dark in the office. I can feel that I've been wronged deep-like; so like a stricken animal I crawled away into a hay-loft to die or sleep as the thing may be.

The next morning I'm dreaming that Uncle Gabe is chasing me with a bayonet, and, when I wakes up, there stands Harmony with a pitchfork in his hands.

"Ex-cuse me," says he. "Did I stick you?"

"You're excusable," says I. "I'm used to it. What's the good news?"

"Good news?" he repeats. "There's a posse after you."

"After me?"

"Uh-huh. I reckon so. Saw a bunch pull out a while ago."

Hank, I'd forgot all about that pinto bronc. I set there on the hay and stares at Harmony. I reckon my physical condition touches his heart, 'cause he says:

"Dobie, I'd hate to be born without no brains, but it must be hard to be shy on luck, too. What you going to do?"

"I ain't going to die in no hay-loft," says I. "Can you stay here for five minutes, Harmony, and forget that you ever seen me?"

"Uh-huh," he nods. "There's a rangy roan down there in the last stall what belongs to me, Dobie. Turn her loose when you don't need her, and she'll come home. She's got saddle-marks on her back."

"I don't wish to deprive you, Harmony," says I.

"No depravity," says he and goes to shoveling hay like he enjoyed it.

I slips down and looks at that mare. She looks like speed; so I slips a hull on her back. Hanging beside the stable office is a belt with a gun in the holster; so I drapes it around me.

Hank, I reckon them saddle-marks must have been harness scars, 'cause I don't no more than fork that brute before she begins to show signs of nervousness.

I slaps her side of the head with my hat, and we went out of the stable door like a rocket and right into the bosom of the posse.

The posse didn't have me, but they did have that stage I put into the river. They're bringing it in with their ropes snubbed to its tongue, and, Hank, I'd rise to remark that there is something going on right there. That roan went deaf and dumb to all advice, and them other broncs seeems to get into the holiday spirit, too. I sees Bliz Hughes' bronc try to get into the saddle with "Wayward" Wayland. Both animals went into the dirt, and my mount sunfishes right over them.

"Slim" Seeley's gray went into the door of the stage far enough to knock Slim off into the street. Two of the Bridle Bit broncs got dry and went into a saloon amid much busting of glass. Then me and Jim Scott bucks back and forth into each other for a couple of hundred yards, when his animal stands on its head, and I went on alone.

Hank, I'd tell a man that bronc could buck. I sees a lot of familiar places, hears a cinch snap, and, when I woke up, I've got the smell of flowers in my nose. I'm laying on my back in one of uncle's flower-beds, and there is my Emmeline standing on the porch looking down at me.

"Don't grieve, Emmeline," says I. "I'm in my right mind."

"Thank Heaven!" she gasps. "Do you mean it, Dobie?"

"Don't get excited," says I, and she says:

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"Who wouldn't get excited at a statement like that if they knowed you as long as I have. Where are you going?"

Hank, I thought about that posse; so I got up and threw the sweet-williams out of my hair and says:

"I don't know yet, wife, but I do know that this ain't the end of my pilgrimage. If I don't move soon, I'll have some flowers over me instead of under me."

"Dobie, for my sake be careful," says she, and I says:

"You don't think about nobody but you. How about my sake, eh?"

That's the way to talk to them, Hank. I limped away from there as fast as I can. I figure that I'm better off in town, where there is places to hide during the day. I can sneak as soon as it gets dark. I've still got that gun on my hip, and I'm almost in the mood to use it. I climbs up on top of a shed back of the Palace saloon and lays down. Nobody can see me there; so I sort of relaxes.

Pretty soon I hears a noise below me; so I sneaks to the edge and looks over.

Hank, you can believe me if you want to, but right under me is Devil Creek, alias Dynamite Carson, or vicy versa. Right through my fertile brain flashes a thousand-dollar thought like lightning, and I rolls right off on top of him.

Hank, I lit right on top of his head, and we went into the dirt. I hit him so hard that he sort of acts dazed-like, and, like the coward he is, he reached for his gun. Well, Hank, that makes me mad; so I bent my gun over his head. I sure licked him a plenty.

"Now," says I, "I'm going to vindicate myself and still have money enough to pay all my debts and not have to ask Hank for anything more."

I picks that supine body up in my strong arms and packs him plumb down to the jail.

The door is open; so I packs him right in and dumps him down in the middle of the floor. There is the sheriff and Uncle Gabe setting there. I couldn't wish for a better audience, Hank, 'cause a feller needs folks around when he's heroing.

I leans on the table while I gets my wind back, and then I points at Devil Creek.

"Anybody else would have done the same if they had been me," says I, 'cause I don't wish no crown of bay-leaves.

Uncle looks at the sheriff and then says—

"I reckon there ain't no argument there, Dobie."

"This is the *hombre* what stole the stage," says I to the sheriff just like he didn't know about it. And then I puts my foot on Devil Creek's head when he tries to get up.

"I've been falsely accused, and I want it canceled," says I. "I hereby vindicates myself. *Sabe?*"

They nods foolish-like, and I continues—

"I didn't find the stage or the money, 'cause he didn't have it with him."

"What stage was that?" asks the sheriff.

Hank, I've knowed a lot of ignorant officers, but they was all wise men beside this sheriff. I stood right there with my foot on Devil Creek's head, and I told him all about it. I sure wised that *hombre* a plenty. I got so interested that I took my foot off Devil Creek's head, and he sat up.

I told him about how I got Devil Creek's description from a detective, and Devil Creek sort of grinned and says—

"He knowed I was after him, and he thought I'd be safer in jail."

"But about the stage," says the sheriff, and Uncle Gabe says—

"Dobie sure thought it had been stolen, and I thought so, too, until I got to Manzanita that night and found the horses in the stable and the money in the safe. After things were explained to me, I just decided not to say a word to Dobie about it. This man just wanted to go down the country, and driving the stage was as good an excuse as anything. I let Dobie worry about it, and I don't reckon he knows yet that the stage wasn't stolen."

I looks at Devil Creek rubbing his head, and I says—

"Mister, would you mind telling me who thought you'd be safer in jail?"

"Dynamite Carson," says he. "He's in Deer Lodge Prison now. Didn't you know about it, Dobie?"

"Who are you?" I asks. "I'd like to know that much."

"Me?" he sighs and rubs his head. "I'm Pete McCoy, a U. P. detective."

Well, Hank, there ain't no news. You can see what chance a married man has when his relatives by marriage cross him that way, can't you? Just then my wife comes to the door. She looks at me and then says—

"Dobie, what are you doing here?"

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"Darling," says I, "I'm just through wiping out a mistake. That stage was never stolen, which will please you to know."

"I knew it all the time, Dobie," says she. "Uncle thought it would be a good lesson to you; so we just let you worry about it. Is that all you've found out?"

Hank, it's a long worm that won't turn. The thought surges through my brain that I've been double-crossed by all my relatives by marriage, and it makes me sore.

"No, that ain't all I've found out," says I. I points at the detective and says, "Emmeline, you gets your hope—I've found a man I can whip."

Well, Hank, there ain't no news, as I said before. That bronc of Jim Scott's pulled off his bridle and came home that night, and the posse wasn't after me at all, Hank. It was just a bunch of punchers who happened to be coming to town and seen that stage anchored on a sand-bar; so they brought it in with them. Harmony is going to have a visit from me as soon as I get able to see, and I'll ask him to explain why he mentioned a posse to me.

I'm going to take the job as barn-boss for Uncle Gabe. He said that a tired business-man ought to have a chance to recuperate and this employment will give my brain a rest. He also said that I was one man in the country that could be trusted with horses so long as I've got an interest in them.

Right now I ain't in shape to do much tending to horses, as I can't see no distance. Regards to all the boys. Emmeline sends love.

Very sincerely and truly yours,

DOBIE DALTON, Barn-boss.

P. S. Hank, I forgot to tell you that I met that detective later on. Just the same I licked him the first time, Hank, and was man enough to carry him all the way to the jail. I was mad that time, Hank, and I can only fight when I'm mad, and maybe I wasn't mad enough at him the last time. Aunt Phœbe says we'll all get our rewards in heaven, but I'll say this much to you, Hank: if there's any railroad detectives up there, I'm sure going to pass up any spirit that looks like a outlaw—or a relative by marriage.

THE GREAT WHITE DAYONG

by Gordon McCreagh

Author of "The White Man of Borneo," "The Poison Devil," etc.

IT WAS a mean situation. The steamy, crawling center of Borneo is always a mean situation under any circumstances. And the circumstances under which these two white men had been doing this same thing for endless days, which had now grown into loathsome weeks, were particularly productive of hell.

There was the Herr Professor, sullen, weary to death and limping a little as he slipped and scrambled through the oozy network of lushy growths; morosely silent mostly, yet driven every now and then by the sheer lonesome horror of the inner jungle into relieving the tension by bursts of snarling speech with his companion.

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His smoldering eyes, deep-sunken into rings of a grimy darkness, flashed imperishable hate at the man.

Those eyes were the only clue to his thoughts; the rest of the face was hidden under a tangle of tawny beard, but it must have been inconceivably gaunt and haggard. An unthinkable situation for a student, for a man of science! But the Herr Professor, urged by a distorted conception of patriotism, had of his own free will withdrawn himself into the mysterious centers of the jungle tribes to experiment with weird poisons which might be disseminated in the form of gas, and he was now paying his just penalty.

And there was Dickinson, tall and grim and lean, all tireless wire and rawhide, miraculously shaved and neatly mended and with a smashed pith helmet jammed truculently over one eye in spite of all the thousand thorny creepers and sword-edged grasses that Borneo could produce. Looking at the two men, it was quite obvious that the prime mover in this strenuous travel was Dickinson.

The order of the day came from his firm-pressed lips, and the Herr Professor snarled with impotent rage and obeyed. Dickinson was looking for a road; and, since the only roads in Borneo are rivers, he drove his prisoner remorselessly through the tangled valleys of the Batu Tejang as straight as if he were laying a transit line till he should come to a river.

There was a river only a day's march to the west, a nice wide river with a swift current down which one could travel in all the luxurious comfort of a dugout *gobang* impelled by sturdy brown Dyaks; but that was the Kapuas, which arrived finally after many steamy windings at Pontianak, where a complacent Dutch *controlleur* would demand of Dickinson by what high-handed right he, a wild wandering American of no official standing, had been going about making prisoners in Dutch territory.

As a matter of fact, in far-off Washington in a room full of steel filing-cabinets, there was a fat file devoted exclusively to Dickinson; but Dickinson was not shouting this information from the housetops. Moreover, he carried, carefully guarded in the remnants of his pack, a note-book full of long chemical formulæ and a deadly little bottle full of an oily volatile liquid, which he was particularly anxious to present as exhibits A and B to the British authorities at Kuching or at Brunei.

The lure of the Kapuas, therefore, was clearly not to be thought of; and Dickinson drove straight ahead looking for a river which flowed toward the north, winning his way through the trackless *rukh* of the jungle and through the sullenly hostile tribes of the interior on his sheer nerve and forceful personality.

It was an inconceivably mean situation for a prisoner, but inconceivably worse for his captor, who had to guard him in addition to all the other troubles of jungle travel. In fact, the only thing which rendered guardianship at all possible was the fact that the Herr Professor was afraid to run away. The cunning treachery of the jungle men who lusted after heads which might be elaborately smoke-cured and offered to Balli Attap, the vindictive one who lived among the treetops, was an infinitely worse thing than the eventual justice of the British at Brunei.

The meanest kind of a situation! And now, to make matters worse, the Madang tribesmen were obstreperous and obdurate. Uma Bam was a village of four *barrios* arranged in a huge semicircle with a *dobo* house in the center. That is to say, it was a very big village; each *barrio* was a quarter of a mile long and was divided into a hundred or more family cubicles which opened on to the long community veranda. At intervals in the veranda were clay platforms which were the community cooking-places; and above the cooking-places, where the smoke would reach them best, hung many heads from elaborately carved poles. Counting by heads, Uma Bam was the fightingest village of all the Madang district, and Tama Tazi was a very big chief indeed.

Dickinson received the first rude jolt to his unceremonious advance when a herald came out to meet him outside of the row of *iboh* stakes which marked the confines of the village. Dickinson noted that the stakes were ornamented with rib and leg bones, gruesomely suggestive relics, but his knowledge of anatomy told him that these were but the bones of swine which had been killed far away from the village and brought in by a sham war party and hung up to trick the *antus* into the belief that they were the bones of enemies taken in battle.

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The festering decoration, then, was not as bad as it looked, but Dickinson screwed his face into a thoughtful grimace. When the spirits of the jungles had to be propitiated wholesale like that, he knew that it meant trouble of some sort.

The herald soon confirmed his surmise. He was a tall, muscular youth who wore in addition to his loin-cloth of beaten *kumut* bark a cloak of goatskin ornamented with toucan's feathers, and he carried a bamboo pole tufted at one end with horse hair and colored cloth. This meant that he was *toucan kabaran*, a king's messenger, and was an indication of the importance with which Tama Tazi regarded himself.

The messenger struck his pole into the ground and squatted in respect and without speaking a word presented Dickinson with a shield, an oblong affair of woven rattan decorated also with toucan's feathers and human hair. This was a war-shield and was in turn an indication of the importance with which Tama Tazi regarded Dickinson, for war-shields are sent usually only to the delegates of a whole tribe. It was evident that tales of this strenuous white man had preceded him.

Dickinson took the shield and laid it aside with careless disinterest.

"Is it war?" he asked casually.

No, great Chief, it was not war—as yet, said the messenger. But Balli Attap was angry and was smiting the village with sickness. And why should he be angry with a great village which offered the heads of many enemies to him—he indicated the festooned pigs' bones, the inference being that the heads of the offerings to the lesser *antus* had been duly reserved for the great Attap himself—why should he be angry, then, except at the presence of the *tuans*, the white men, who accorded to him no honor but only disbelief? It was necessary therefore—and let the great chief not be angered thereat, because all the *dayongs*, the witch-doctors, had said so—that the omens be consulted; upon the result would depend whether the tribe would come out to make war against the two white men.

Long experience in dealing with jungle people had taught Dickinson the value of taking the bold initiative. He replied to the herald with cool decision.

"There is no need. I have consulted the omens myself. I make no war upon your village. As for the matter of Balli Attap, it is necessary that I see the chiefs and the omen-readers. Lead the way."

WITHOUT any more talk he pulled his hat yet further over his right eye and strode past the dead-line of *iboh* stakes. The flabbergasted messenger unconsciously fell into the lead, and Dickinson motioned with his head to the professor to come into line with him. Between then and the coming meeting with the chiefs he would have to think up some plausible line of talk. He noted the anxiety on his companion's face, and he grinned at him in cheerful derision.

"Professor *Tuan*," he chuckled, "if you ever want to see the inside of a British military prison, it behooves you to walk with much circumspection just now, for these folks are on the thin edge of a flare-up. See the tattooing on the back of this guy's left hand? That means that he's got his first head. If he could get yours, he'd be tattooed all over and have at least three wives."

The professor snarled at him as was his habit. But he fell into line.

There was no need for the messenger to announce the arrival of the white men, for all the dogs in the village, gaunt, yellow things, rushed out in a howling herd to investigate this new scent which had come into their midst. The messenger howled back at them, and they in turn yelped in still louder frenzy till an army of small boys ran from under the *barrios* and fell upon them with stones and shrill yells; and, escorted by this skirmishing party, the visitors came to the extreme left end of the *barrio* which was to the left of the other three.

The long veranda was empty. Every householder with his family had retired into his private cubicle, and the great barrack hummed from within like a huge hive. Dickinson knew that a dozen blowguns covered them both through slits in the coarse bamboo matting of the walls and that the first least false move would call for a volley of thin slivers of poisoned hardwood, but he knew, also, better than to show any indecision by waiting.

He stepped gingerly over the barricade of festering refuse which marked the sweepings from the veranda, walked coolly up the notched pole which did duty for a ladder and sat down on the raised platform

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which ran the whole length of the outer rail. The professor was with him in a second.

Dickinson looked about him with careless interest. The veranda was some twelve feet wide, built of bamboo and roofed with a thatch of the nibong palm. Opposite to him were a series of rough-hewn plank doors, for all the world like a row of crude bath-houses. These were the private sleeping-quarters, one sty to each family; the veranda was the cooking and eating and general living-place. From the walls and rafters hung the spears and blow-guns and head trophies and pots and all the paraphernalia of tribal housekeeping.

A little to one side Dickinson spied a string of native tobacco. He took one long stride and helped himself to a leaf; he rolled a little of it carefully and filled his pipe. The rest he handed the professor.

"Better make yourself a smoke of some sort; it looks well for effect," he said, and then he sat and smoked in wooden-faced silence.

They had arrived at the crux of the crucial moment!

Out of the corner of his eye Dickinson noted that the professor was backing him up valiantly; but he was thankful for the long beard which hid so much of the other's face, for the eyes were like a trapped wild thing's. He was thankful again that it was hot, swelteringly hot, to explain the beads of perspiration on his own forehead. He could not help his hand stealing in under his tattered shirt to get the comforting feel of his automatic pistol, his last relic of white man's dominance—though, of what use it could be in the sudden rush which was even then hanging in the balance, he could not think. Then he withdrew his hand and yawned with ostentation.

The effect of it all was perfect. It worked. Suddenly the door on the extreme left of the veranda opened, and an old man stepped out. He wore a simple *jawat* of trade goods round his loins and a skullcap of woven rattan. The backs of both his hands and his insteps, as well as sections of his arms, were tattooed, and the upper lobes of his ears were pierced and fitted with tiger-cats' teeth, which gave them a pointed and particularly devilish expression. Otherwise the man's face was by no means ferocious, cunning rather.

With him came the messenger, carrying a three-legged stool. The old man seated himself with ceremony and remained, saying never a word. Dickinson smoked on in silence. Presently a small procession of fantastically decorated men emerged from the great *dobo* house and came to join the silent picnic on the veranda. When all were squatted in a semicircle like so many vultures, the messenger thrust his pole of office into a crevice in the bamboo floor, gripped it firmly with his toes and made announcement:

"Tama Tazi, chief over a hundred chiefs, taker of a hundred heads, father of a hundred warriors, is present."

Dickinson took his pipe from his mouth.

"Good," he said. "I will speak with Tama Tazi and the *dayongs* of Uma Bam."

The conversation which followed was like a fencing match, the natives ever suspicious and watchful, and Dickinson equally keen not to miss a point or to overlook a single queer twist of their line of thought. It was conducted in that bastard Dyak dialect which is a *lingua franca* throughout the central tribes, and it wandered through all the phases and incidents of jungle life before it came, inadvertently as it were, to the matter of the sickness which was troubling the village.

Ah, said Dickinson. Oh yes, he had heard something of that. The messenger had said the Balli Attap was angr . Well, as it happened, he knew all about that. While he was consulting the omens on his own account to decide whether he would make war on this village of Uma Bam or pass it by peaceably, he had discovered that that most easily angered god was annoyed because he knew that the heads which hung from the newly carved pole in the *dobo* house were nothing more than old heads which had been taken out into the jungle, wrapped up in bark cloth and then daubed with a little pigs' blood and brought back accompanied by a lot of noise.

The pretended war party might have known all this if they had not been fools. Did they not remember that on the night of the sham raid the most potent of all the omen beasts, the barking deer, had barked on twenty-three occasions from the right-hand side of the party and on each occasion had given vent to twenty-three barks? This was safe betting, because barking deer disturbed at night give their short, harsh call at frequent intervals and keep it up for a considerable number of times.

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Well, then, he concluded accusingly, what could they expect?

"*Whaul!*" murmured the *dayongs*. "It is true. It was even so. The white man must be a mighty reader of omens."

"Assuredly so," Dickinson agreed gracefully. And, as for the sickness which Balli Attap had sent, his companion here, the Tuan Rambut, was a great white *dayong*. Maybe they had heard of him.

Yes, said the chief. Tales had come of a white *dayong* with a hairy face who had been making a deadly magic in the jungles to the south.

Well, then, Dickinson asserted with conviction, the white *dayong* had a magic whereby he would cure the sickness. It was enough. Let a room be prepared for them and food brought with speed.

It was the order of a man secure in the knowledge of his superiority, and as such it carried authority and was immediately obeyed. In an astonishingly short space of time a cubicle within a few doors of the chief's was empty and not too unspeakably foul to enter. For the time being, the crisis was over. How long the impression would last or how long the bluff would hold depended on the white men's own infinitely careful diplomacy. Dickinson leaned limply against the door and blew a long whistling breath.

"Phe-ew, that was touch and go, Professor *Tuan*. Now it's up to you."

The Herr Professor growled through habit, but his tone was submissive.

"How iss it up to me? *Gott* in heaven, what can I do with this sickness that I do not know? And medicines have I not, either!"

"With any sort of luck you won't need drugs," Dickinson snapped at him. "Jungle people never get really sick. It's probably some stomach complaint due to filth or bad water or something. Give 'em a quart of wild castor-oil berries apiece and starve 'em for three days. That'll be easy—put a food tabu on them and give 'em a package of anything that stinks to tie over their bellies with a lot of magic hokum to shoot the fear of almighty Pete into them. All these people ever need is to give their insides a rest. Take a hold of yourself, man, and I'll promise to land you in Brunei yet as exhibit C."

For a wonder the professor did not snarl. Close and nauseating contact with the Madang people made even a detention camp seem like a far distant promised land to be attained by prayer and earnest endeavor. He fell to discussing, with the first show of decency which he had evinced since Dickinson had made him prisoner, plans and means for making an imposing display of magic with which to discomfit the vindictive Attap. And, since Dickinson had a wild imagination and knew many things which were fearful to the natives, they evolved between them a weird and fearsome ceremony of witchcraft.

WITH the next morning the professor emerged from their den, full of confidence to tackle the epidemic, whatever it might be, and armed with half a hundred-weight of castor berries and a portentous program of sorcery. So earnestly did he throw himself into the work in hand that Dickinson, drawn by the link of their common danger, found himself regarding almost with a friendly feeling this other white man in misfortune. He felt impelled to commend him upon his work to make up in some measure for the cheerful insult with which he had hitherto driven him through the jungles.

"Professor *Tuan*, you're doing nobly," he said as he watched the other burn a handful of foul-smelling herbs and mutter the devil's incantation from "Die Freischutz" over a wild-eyed native, who groaned more with terror than pain. "You know, Doc, I don't believe you're such a bad sort of a gink personally, after all. It's just that your people have some ideas about expediency which my people don't agree with, and we've decided to put your ideas out of business for keeps."

The professor looked up and grunted, and then he swiftly lowered his expressive eyes, for there was a blaze of hope in them, a new and unexpecteed hope born of a carefully thought-out plan.

Dickinson went off with his one inexorable purpose in view to inquire about rivers, and the Herr Professor bent himself with his new-born purpose of escape to build up his plan. It was a clever plan, a coolly efficient plan, a plan quite in keeping with those ideas of expediency which Dickinson's people had decided to stamp out of the world.

For two days the professor toiled quietly and efficiently, and then the beginnings

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of his plan began to work out according to his carefully conceived scheme. Tama Banyoh, the second chief of the village, began to feel a lot better from the pain in his stomach, and he regarded the professor with a fearful reverence. He addressed him almost with timidity.

"The Tuan Rambut, the Hairy One, is a great magician," he ventured.

The professor accepted the compliment with easy composure.

"Yet that other one, the Hawk Face, has the mastery," the chief continued with cunning native observation.

The professor never batted an eyelash.

"It is even so," he agreed immediately. "The *Tuan Impasit* has a great magic which makes him more powerful than all men. By its means he is rendered braver than the bravest, stronger than the strongest and, moreover, invulnerable. This magic he guards carefully in a bottle which in turn rests in soft cloths in the gourd which he has given to the chief of the *dayongs* to hold for him under *tabu* in the *dobo* house."

"*Whau*, that must be a very great magic!" exclaimed the chief.

"It is," said the professor grimly. "A magic of life and death, and whatever man shall be sprinkled with it, even with one drop, shall have the power. But, if the *tuan* be sprinkled with it a second time, he becomes as an ordinary man and he can not then take vengeance. Therefore does he guard it so carefully lest other men become as great as he."

"Aho, is that so?" murmured the chief.

"It is even so," said the very clever professor, and he went to attend to other patients and to leave the good seed to grow.

The magic in the bottle was the result of all the professor's experiments, and well he knew that it was a magic of life and death. Dickinson had seen it, when sprayed in a spirit of cold-blooded experiment into a native hut, presently tear the very entrails out of the wretched folk who had breathed it. Small wonder that he guarded it so carefully under a *tabu* and that he had made a grim resolve, which never relented in the face of the most unspeakable hardships, to deliver the professor into safekeeping.

But luck, that queerly vacillating factor in the affairs of men, seemed to take a turn against him just then—or was it that swift readiness to take advantage of every possible opportunity without regard to conscience which some people call luck?

It happened that the Madang people, in their extremity of fear under the anger of Balli Attap, had sent a delegation to the Muruts, a fierce mountain tribe to the west of themselves who were apparently also under the ban, to arrange for a conference of witch-doctors to decide on a means of propitiating the malicious one. Word came now that the *dayongs* of the Muruts were gathered outside the confines of the village.

They might not come in, because there was an interminable blood-feud between the two tribes. It was a custom that no such hostiles could enter a village of their enemies, even under a temporary truce, before all accounts had been settled up by the payment of *usut*, blood-money. The Muruts were some half a dozen heads to the good; so they were by no means anxious to enter into so unprofitable a negotiation. They waited outside.

The Madangs had sent out their call for help before the advent of the great white *dayong* with his potent witchcraft. But now with the third day, when the sick were all well on their way to recovery, simple savage logic demanded to know what need was there of uniting in a common cause with the enemy. The memory of those six heads, too, rankled. The natural result was that the conference of *dayongs*, which began with absurd demands on the part of the Madang delegates, developed into an acrimonious argument and ended in a fight. This was the opportunity which could be developed into the germ of luck.

The professor knew that, if only he could get away from or get rid of his accursed jailer, he would be free, and then—on the other side of the Murut Hills was the Kapuas River! With calm assurance, then, in his capacity of great white magician he went out to talk with the disgruntled *dayongs* of the Muruts before they should start on their return journey. The talk, of course, wandered all round the compass before it came to the desired point. Finally, however, the crafty professor found an opportunity to express indignation at the scurvy treatment accorded to an honorable delegation.

The *dayongs* leaped up and down and

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howled at the recollection of their wrongs, and the professor nodded in agreement.

"Yes, this is a very evil people," he said slowly, and then suddenly he thrust his body into the circle and held them with his blazing eyes. "What, O *Dayongs* of the Muruts, what," he growled ominously, "if I by my magic slay all the warriors of this village?"

The *dayongs* stiffened and held their breaths at the stupendous thought.

"Is this thing possible?" one of them asked at length.

"For you it is not possible, but for me all things are possible," said the professor in impious paraphrase.

The prospect was staggering. If the warriors—or even a fair percentage of them—should be killed. . . What an orgy! What a hunting of heads! And heads, whether of women or children, were heads after all. The various gods and *antus* were not particular. At last the chief *dayong* found words.

"If you can do this thing, O greatest of white *dayongs*," he promised without reserve, "there is nothing in the country of the Muruts which is not yours."

And the other *dayongs* shouted "*Hau!*" in unqualified approval.

The Herr Professor went home chuckling in his tawny beard at his accomplishment. To his carefully kultured mind this constituted the quintessence of diplomacy.

IN THE meanwhile luck had been playing a strong hand. The good seed so cunningly sown had germinated. Tama Banyoh came to the professor quietly and began to question him whether this *tabu* which the hawk-faced one had laid on his gourd could not be broken by some magic in the great white one's possession: because, if so, the bottle could be stolen and all the warriors of the tribe, including the professor, could benefit by its baptism.

Assuredly, said the professor, he could break the *tabu*. But—and he reflected quickly that the murder of the whole tribe would not necessarily eliminate Dickinson, and a wave of cold fear gripped him at the thought of that terrible man being left alive—but the sprinkling must be done with the proper ceremony, and the *Tuan Impasit* must be present; otherwise the charm would not work.

What did it matter to the scientific mind of a Herr Professor if a tribe had to die under the most unspeakable agonies—so long as expediency demanded it?

And then right in the middle of his elation he went deathly cold again, for Dickinson himself came striding like a gaunt ghost of Nemesis into the clever little conspiracy!

But Dickinson smote the professor on the back and grinned with jubilation.

"Professor *Tuan*, you're a great physician," he cried. "You've done miracles. The curse of old Attap has been lifted, and tomorrow there's going to be a big purification ceremony in the *dobo* house. After that we're free to go with all the honors of war and with guides, and just three days march from here we hit the headwaters of the Baram River; and then—Brunei! I'm kinda sorry for you, old scout. But I guess it won't be for long, and they'll let you play tennis and all that.

Dickinson was so obsessed with his determination to deliver his prisoner into safe-keeping that he was quite unable to see the thing from the other side. But the professor smiled at him quite pleasantly.

Dickinson strode on, full of energy and enthusiasm, to make arrangements for their coming departure, and the professor turned again to the chief.

"This purification ceremony, then. This will be the occasion. But remember—before the magic is opened, it is necessary that I go to the door to consult the omens of the night. And remember again without fail—there must be men ready to seize the other *tuan* and hold him lest he leap up and spoil the sprinkling."

A very pretty little plot—from a Herr Professor's distorted point of view. Cold-blooded and cleverly calculated and safe—for the professor. And, like every well-calculated plan, it worked!

The great *dobo* house was packed with all the warriors of the tribe for the ceremony of release from the anger of the god. The *dayongs* beat upon drums and danced weird evolutions round the magic fire in the center and made incantations involving incredible noise and agility which lasted far into the night. After many hours, when the house—which had but one door and no ventilation—was fetid with smoke and sweat, the chief *dayong* advanced alone to the center, and

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the warriors stiffened with the expectation of some great and unusual thing which had been whispered among them.

Four sturdy young men ranged themselves carelessly close to the two white men, and the professor got up and edged toward the door, murmuring something about a mouthful of fresh air. At the door he stood and gazed out, apparently rapt in contemplation, and the chief *dayong* watched him breathlessly. Suddenly the professor threw up his hand!

Immediately the chief *dayong* drew his hand from under his robe and held aloft the deadly little bottle, turning it round lovingly so that its contents glistened oilily in the firelight. In the natural course of native reasoning he would have made a long oration, but he had been carefully schooled by the professor. He uttered but three magic words, and his other hand went to the stopper!

Dickinson leaped up with a horrified shout—and immediately went down under the combined weight of the four brawny tribesmen.

And then, with deliberate method and without flurry, the awful thing happened! The *dayong* removed the stopper and advanced among the warriors, sprinkling from the bottle!

Dickinson's voice, muffled and hoarse with horror as he yelled that there was death in that thing, passed unnoticed, and the *dayong* quietly proceeded with his deadly occupation. Then Dickinson's thoughts flashed to his own fearful plight. By the grace of Providence he had picked up many methods of rough and tumble fighting which came as an excruciating revelation to his would-be captors. In an astonishingly short number of seconds he was free.

"It is death!" he yelled. "Outside all!"

And he rushed for the nearest wall of the *dobo* house—the door was too far. He bunched his body into a ball and hurled himself at the wattle-and-daub wall. His whole hundred and seventy-odd pounds hit it like a shell, and he went through it as if it had been paper. He picked himself up half-stunned and noted that many of the tribesmen had taken alarm at his frenzied warning and were clawing their way out of the building. But the horror that had happened was already a holocaust such as would stagger even those cold-blooded savages who slew as a matter of religious conviction.

And somewhere out in the night the highly evolutionized product of a careful educational system was running, crouched like a great ape and chuckling to himself at his cleverness, running for the Murut Hills.

And Dickinson, too, turned and ran from that awful place. He knew that presently many of the wretched warriors would be writhing on the ground. And he knew that they would be past human help. He did not want to see that sight. He knew, moreover, that a swift fury of unreasoning vengeance would fall on him. And so he ran while the running was good.

But, even in the desperate hurry and scramble of escape through the clinging darkness, his mind was obsessed with the cold determination that that remorselessly inhuman man of science with his secret which might eventually be put to such a deadly use against the khaki lines of old Uncle Sam should never be permitted to escape.

IN THE Murut Hills was rejoicing and high festival. Scouts who had gone out had come back and reported that it was indeed true that some great calamity had befallen the Madangs, for the approaches to the village were sowed thick with death stakes. The hillmen, therefore, were now making war-magic and were preparing to go down on a great raid.

In the middle of it all came a startled tribesman to say that a wild and fierce white man stood as a delegate without the village and demanded speech with the head men. This was so unusual an occurrence that the head men got together and went with speed. The wild white man wasted no time in the usual preliminaries. He stated his wishes with hard succinctness.

"You have among you an animal, a hairy ape of the lower jungles who looks like a white man. This I know, for I have trailed him hither."

The head men were a little overawed by the fierce truculence of his tone.

"Nay, *Tuan;* we have with us the great white wizard." The denial was rather apologetic.

"It is well. Deliver to me this thing immediately, bound."

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The head men were startled but not cowed—as yet.

"*Tuan*, this can not be, for the man is a great chief among us."

"Is this the last word?" snapped the white man.

"There is no other word in our mouths, *Tuan*."

"Very well then. Listen, head men of the Muruts. I will make war upon you and upon your fields and upon your houses, and I will not cease till my command is obeyed."

This was too much for the untamed mountain fold. They rushed in a body at this bedraggled-looking white man who stood so truculently against them with his one hand under his tattered shirt. Immediately something spat fire from his side three times, and the three foremost of the head men fell. The rest turned and fled at this portent.

"Remember—it is war!" shouted the white man after them, and he turned and disappeared into the jungle before the tribe should come out against him in force.

War certainly sounded like a foolish and vain-glorious boast for a single wild and tattered white man to make against a whole village. But this white man was very far from being foolish, and he knew the native mind and its ways with uncanny thoroughness. A campaign of terrorism aimed at their superstitions would eventually win, he was sure. It required only a sufficiently vivid imagination coupled with an endless persistence and an ability to keep hidden. All of these qualifications the white man possessed in an amazing degree, and he sat in his cunning hiding-place and reviewed his plan of battle with a certain grim cheerfulness.

"All you've got to do, Dick, my boy, is to fill 'em up full with the fear of devils, and they'll come crawling." He talked softly to himself to keep out the loneliness of the jungle. "Question is, how—without any resources at all. Lemme see—hm—good old Maxim. That's one sure-fire bet. Yes, guess I'll start with that."

That same evening after dark a frightened boy ran into the village, shrieking with terror, and babbled that the wild white man had suddenly materialized out of nowhere and had caught him with a hand that was not the hand of a man; and his face, moreover, had become the face of a devil; and this devil had told him that he was master of all the devils in the jungles, to prove which he had promised that, beginning with the next morning, the *dayongs* of the village would begin to fall dead in their tracks, slain by invisible demons.

It was a wild, circumstantial story, and the *dayongs* laughed. Not that they were not susceptible to suggestion; but was there not among them the great white wizard? What need, then, to worry about the ravings of a mere amateur. But the very next morning, quite early, one of them suddenly did fall to the ground as he crossed the open space between two *barrios*, and after a spasm or two he lay still. The frightened tribesmen found only a tiny hole in his chest. Later in the day another one dropped. And the next day one more. And all in the most terrifyingly mysterious silence.

That was the meaning of Dickinson's murmured reference to "good old Maxim." He had learned long ago that the mystery of a Maxim silencer could be put to the most effective use against superstitious savages, and he always carried one of the little six-inch tubes accordingly. In vain the great white *dayong* assured the tribesmen that this was nothing but the white man's fire-gun.

They insisted that they had seen the white man's fire-gun and had heard it, whereas this death which came out of nowhere was deadly silent and was surely the work of devils. It was clearly up to the great white *dayong*, therefore, to make magic and put a stop to this thing.

The Herr Professor began to feel much less secure in his security. He had been white with fear, as it was, when he had learned that Dickinson had escaped the death-trap and had tracked him down. He knew in his inmost soul that eventually that terrifyingly cold persistence would get him, but he had fought the thought from him. And now he found the easily influenced tribesmen already clamoring for a miracle which he was unable to produce.

Already they were beginning to ask one another whether the other white man were not really the greater magician after all. Among the Madang people, they knew, he had been spoken of as the master; whereas this man had nothing but his own boast to prove that he was the greater, and, when it came to the proof, as now, he failed miserably to make his boast good.

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A very mean situation once again for a man of science!

IN THE meanwhile Dickinson was growing more confidently cheerful every day. He hated this necessity of sniping at the witch-doctors. But he consoled himself with the reflection that they had been partners in the whole hideous plot anyway and, further, that there was no other way. It just had to be. The professor's secret was too terrible a thing to permit to get out into the hands of others as ruthless as himself.

Five *dayongs* died, and then Dickinson stood once again at the outskirts of the village, more ragged and more truculent than ever. This time the head men kept at a very safe distance.

"Well, are you ready to deliver that thing to me?" Dickinson barked at them almost as sharply as his own gun on that last occasion.

"*Tuan*, the great white *dayong* is——"

"Ah, monkey talk!" Dickinson snapped at them. "It is no white *dayong*, but a liar and a cheat and an animal less than the apes. If he be a *dayong*, let him avert the calamity which will befall you at the hands of my devils this very night and the next night again till wisdom comes to you."

With that he turned his back on them with a nerve-shaking contempt and strode away.

That might be contrived to set fire to two of the three long *barrios* which composed the village. It was an almost unbelievable feat, and it must have required an infinite skill in stalking. But the fact remains—it was accomplished. The dwellers, of course, rushed out like bees and rushed up and down in ineffectual confusion with all the pandemonium of unorganized savagery. They saved their lives, but that was all. The dry, fragile buildings went up each in a roaring line of flame almost like a gunpowder train, and all the weapons and implements of the tribe went with them. Worst of all—unspeakable calamity, this—there were destroyed the priceless heads of many years collecting!

The outcry against the great white *dayong* was long and fierce.

The next night the wretchedly cultivated terraces of paddy lower down the hillside went up similarly in flames. This was most certainly the work of devils, for the villagers had planted *tabu* charms of the most dire potence all round the fields, and generations of experience had showed that no human enemy would ever dare the penalty.

And then for the third time Dickinson stood outside the confines of the village, forceful, resolute and very grim. This time the head men came without delay, and, approaching close, they beat their heads upon the ground, making a thin wailing noise the while. A goatskin was produced and spread at Dickinson's feet, and Dickinson smiled thinly. As the toucan is the war-bird among the central Bornean tribes, so the goat is the emblem of peace.

"Good," said Dickinson tersely. "Let him be brought."

The chief head man motioned with his hand, and a tribesman who had been in the background came reluctantly forward carrying a woven cane basket. He deposited it with a soft bump on the goatskin mat and then turned and fled in an extremity of terror. The head men beat their foreheads on the ground again and wailed once more, and then the chief squatted upright and spoke submissively.

"It is there, great Chief. Even as the *tuan* has ordered. And let the *tuan* not be angry that he was forestalled in taking it with his own hands; but some of my young men, in their grief at the loss of so many trophies, were hasty—and for so mighty a warrior as the great chief what does one head more or less matter? Let the *tuan*, therefore, remove his anger from us, and let there be peace."

Dickinson stood motionless for many minutes, and the hard imperiousness in his face melted out and set again in a harder mask of contemplation, and his eyes narrowed slowly and slowly opened wide again in wonder at the mysterious working of it all. Finally he stooped and looked into the basket. Then he turned again to the head men and spoke what they did not understand.

"There is no cause for war. He has paid."

He motioned them to go, and, long after they had left him, he still stood looking with grim intentness at the basket. Finally he spoke again, slowly and with relief.

"Exhibit C," he muttered. "That's all I've got to take to Brunei—but by the grace o' God his secret goes with him!"

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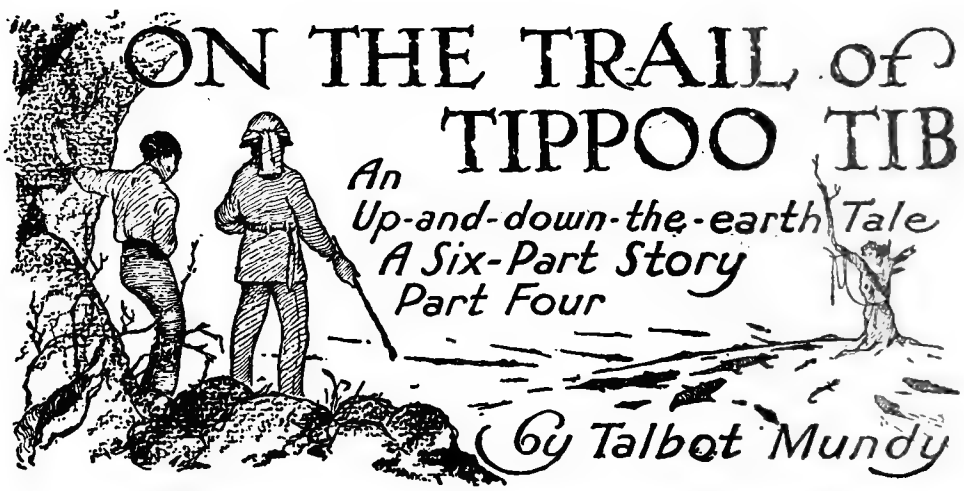

Author of "Heinie Horns Into the Game," "The End of the Bad Ship Bundesrath," *etc.*

VIII

We were an ignorant people. Out of a gloom we came,
Hungering, striving, feasting—vanishing into the same.
Came to us your fore-loopers, told us the gloom was bad,
Spoke of the light that might be—simply it might be had—
Knowledge and wealth and freedom, plenty and peace and play,
And all at the price of obedience. "Listen and learn and obey,"
We were told, "and the gloom shall be lifted. Ignorance surely is shame."
We listened to your fore-loopers, till presently *cadis** came.

We were an ignorant people. Our law was "An eye for an eye,"
And he who wronged should right the wrong, and he who stole should die.
Bad law, the *cadis* told us, based on the fall of man;
And they set us to building law-courts on the Pangermanic plan—
Courts where the gloom of ages should be pierced, said they, with light.
And scientific theory displace wrong views of right.
The *cadis*' law was writ in books that none but they could read;
But what should we know of the strings to that? 'Twas gloom when we agreed.

We were an ignorant people. The *Offizieren* came
To lend to law eye, tooth and claw and so enforce the same.
Now none are the tribal customs; free speech is under ban;
Displaced are misconceptions that were based on fallen man,
And our gloom has gone in darkness of the risen German's night,
Nor is there salt of mercy, though we recognize the might.
They strike—we may not answer, nor dare we ask them why.
Their drunken *Herrs* are supermen. If we rebel, we die!

Ipsos Custodes.

*Cadi—judge.

I SAT down once more on the hospital steps. I had marched, endured and waited on the strength of anticipation. Now that the surgeon would not see me, I could think of nothing but to go and hide somewhere like a wounded animal.

But there were two more swift shocks in store—and no hiding-place. The launch of which Schubert had spoken had come from British East. Hand in hand from the water-front, followed by the obsequious Schubert, all smiles and long black whip—for the chain-gang trailed after with the luggage and needed to be overawed—walked Professor Schillingschen and Lady Isobel Saffren Waldon. The professor seemed in love, for he ogled and smirked like a bearded gargoyle; and she made such play of being charmed by his grimaces that the Syrian maid fell behind to hide her face.

None of us spoke. We watched them. Personally I was incapable of sounding further depths of gloom—too full of pain bodily to suffer mentally from threats of what might yet be. But the other two looked miserable—more so because Fred's bearded chin perked up so bravely, and Will set his jaw like a rock.

Not one of us had said a word when the biggest *askar* we had seen yet strode up to us—saluted—and gave Fred a sealed envelope. It was written in English,

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addressed to us three by name—although our names were wrongly spelled. We were required to present ourselves at the court-house at once, reason not given. The letter was signed "Liebenkrantz—*Leutnant.*"

The *askar* waited for us. I suppose it would not be correct to say we were under arrest, but the enormous black man made it sufficiently obvious that he did not intend returning to the court without us. The court-house was not more than two hundred yards away.

As we turned toward it, we saw Lady Saffren Waldon being helped into the commandant's litter, borne by four men, the commandant himself superintending the ceremony with a vast deal of bowing and chatter, and Professor Schillingschen looking on with an air of owning litter, porters, township, *boma* and all. As we turned our backs on them, they started off toward the neat white dwelling on the hill.

The court was a round, grass-roofed affair, with whitewashed walls of sun-dried brick. For about four-fifths of the circumference the wall was barely breast-high, the roof being supported on wooden pillars bricked into the wall as well as by the huge pole that propped it up umbrella-wise in the center.

The remaining fifth of the wall continued up as high as the roof, forming a back to the platform. Facing the platform was the entrance, and on either side benches arranged in rows followed the curve of the wall. There was a long table on the platform at which sat the lieutenant who had summoned us, with a sergeant seated on either hand. The sergeants were acting as court clerks, scribbling busily on sheets of blue paper and in books.

Behind the lieutenant, in a great gilt frame on the whitewashed wall was a full-length portrait of the Kaiser in general's uniform. The Kaiser was depicted scowling, his gloved hands resting on a saber.

All the benches were crowded with spectators, prisoners, witnesses and litigants. Outside at least two hundred Arabs, Indians and natives leaned with elbows on the wall and gazed at the scene within. The lieutenant glared but otherwise took no notice of our entry; he gave no order, but one of the two sergeants came down from the platform and kicked half a dozen natives off the front bench to make room for us.

We were mistaken in supposing our case would be called first or even among the first. The floor in the midst of the court was clear except for a long, single line of natives and six *askari* corporals, each with a whip in his hand. It was evident at once that these natives were all ahead of us, even if those on the benches were not to be heard and dealt with before our turn came.

"Look at the far end of the line!" whispered Fred.

Lo and behold—Kazimoto, looking rather drawn and gray but standing bravely, looking neither to the right nor left. I judged he knew we were in court—he could hardly have failed to notice our coming in—but he steadily refused to turn his head and see us.

"What has he done?" I wondered.

"Nothing more than told some Heinie to go to ——, you can bet your boots!" said Will.

The lieutenant was in no hurry to enlighten us. Our boy stood at the wrong end of the line to be taken first. The lieutenant called a name, and two great *askaris* pounced on the trembling native at the other end and dragged him along before the desk.

"Silence!" the lieutenant roared.

He had a voice as mean as a hyena's. The insolent, upturned twist of his fair mustache showed both corners of a thin-lipped mouth. He had the Prussian head, shaped square whichever way you viewed it. There was strength in the jaw-bones—strength in the deep-set, bright eyes—strength in the shoulders that were square as box corners without any padding—strength in the lean, lithe figure; but it was always brute strength.

There was no moral strength whatever in the restless fidgeting—the savage winding and unwinding of his right foot around the saber scabbard—or the attitude, leaning forward over the table, of petulant pugnacity. And the cruel voice was as weak as the hand was strong with which he rapped on the table.

He told the boy in front of him sharply that he stood charged with theft.

"With theft of what thing and whose thing?" the boy answered.

Now that he faced nemesis, the strength of native fatalism came to the boy's rescue, bolstering up the pride that every uncontaminated Nyamwezi owns. He was not

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more than seventeen years old, but he stood there at last like a veteran at bay.

"Beat him!" ordered the lieutenant. "Call the next case while that one is being taught good manners!"

A woman was stood in front of the line, fidgety with fear, in doubt whether to lay her suckling baby on the bench before she faced military justice. She laid it on the floor at her feet, hesitated, then picked it up again and wrapped it in a corner of the red blanket that constituted her only dress.

"Take that brat away from her!" the lieutenant ordered. "She must pay attention to me. With that in her arms she will only think of mothering!"

An *askar* seized the baby by the arm and leg and gave it with a laugh to another woman to hold, its mother whimpering with fright until she saw it safely nestled.

"Quick, now! What about this one?"

It seemed there was no charge against her. The two sergeants searched through the piles of blue sheets in vain.

"Then what the devil is she here for? What do you want, you?"

The trembling woman pointed to her baby but was dumb. It needed courage to answer that lieutenant, and the *crack—crack—crack* of a thick *kiboko* descending at measured intervals on the naked back of the boy who had answered boldly was no help toward reassurance.

"Speak," the lieutenant ordered, "or I shall have you compelled to speak!"

She burst into sudden volubility. The dam once down, she poured forth a catalog of wrongs that seemed endless, switching off from one dialect to another and at intervals inserting, apropos apparently of nothing, the few words of German she had picked up. The lieutenant yelled for an interpreter, and a Nyamwezi who knew German rose from the front bench and came and stood beside her.

"That baby is a white man's," he explained.

"What does she want?"

"She says the white man is the *Bwana Dakitari* (the doctor)."

"Oh! Then I am glad she came here. It is time these loose women were taught a lesson! They all tell the same tale. They say a white man passed through the village, gave their father a present and carried them off. Is that her tale too?"

"Yes."

"Well—what of it? The father agreed at the time when he accepted the present, didn't he? The consequence is a baby—not for the first time! Instead of going back to her village, she comes here and tries to blackmail the officer. She is young. It's the first time she has been in this court. This time I will be lenient. One hundred lashes!"

THE interpreter translated, and the woman screamed. An *askar* seized her by the shoulders. She clung to him, but he threw her to the ground, and another one tore off the blanket that would have deadened the blows to some extent. She begged and clung to their feet, but the blows began to rain on her, and presently she lay still, her breasts flattened against the earth floor, her mouth full of dust, and her naked body paralyzed by fear of the descending lash.

"Now bring in number one again!" the lieutenant ordered.

The *askaris* ceased from flogging him. One of them kicked him to his feet, bruised and bloody.

"Did you steal or did you not?" asked the lieutenant.

"Steal what from whom?"

"Oh, go on beating him! Next case!"

The next man escaped the whip, but his witnesses were less fortunate. He brought two men and a woman with him to prove an alibi on a charge of attempted theft, and the glibness of their answers convinced the lieutenant they were lying. In the absence of all evidence for the prosecution, except the unsupported word of a police *askar* who admitted a personal grudge against the defendant, the lieutenant resorted to the whip to change the witnesses' convictions, but without avail.

The woman yelled under the lash like a demented thing but, far from withdrawing her statements, tried to spit in the lieutenant's face when jerked to her feet and stood again before him—an impossible feat because the platform on which he sat at the table was too high. He had her beaten a second time for spitting.

The next man was a fat Baganda from British territory, charged with trading without a license. He pleaded ignorance of the law and denied having traded. He was flogged for telling lies in court and changed

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his testimony under the lash, whereat he was promptly sentenced to a hundred and fifty lashes and a month on the chain-gang. Under the lash a second time he recanted—swore that his first statements had been true and that he had done no trading—a mistake in tactics that only caused the tale of lashes to be increased by fifty and the term on the chain-gang to be doubled.

"You must learn that the methods taught you on British territory are of no use here!" remarked the lieutenant.

By the time Kazimoto was called and stood out alone in front of him, the lieutenant was in a boiling rage, and the floor of the court was crowded by prone natives being beaten. Extra *askaris* had been sent for in order that proceedings might not be delayed, and the audience could scarcely hear the evidence and sentences because of the crack of whips and the moans of victims.

As Kazimoto faced the lieutenant, he turned once and looked at us. His eyes sought Fred's.

"Oh, *Bwana!*" he said—and now for the first time we learned why he had chosen Fred to be his particular master. "I have been faithful! Stroke, then, that beard of yours as Bwana Courtney, my former master, used to stroke his. Then we shall both know what to do!"

Fred stroked his beard promptly, for the man needed comfort, not ridicule.

"Face this way!" the lieutenant shouted. "You are charged with being a deserter from German service. Also with giving information to foreigners. Also with refusing to give proper answers when questioned. Do you understand?"

"No," said Kazimoto in the most melancholy tone I ever heard from him.

"Are you a Nyamwezi? Now don't dare lie to me!"

"Yes."

"Then you belong in this country!"

"I belong where my master takes me. My spirit is good. I am a true man," Kazimoto answered.

"Your spirit is rotten! You are a traitor! What do you mean by talking to me of your master, you reptile! Your master is the German Government, of which his Majesty, the Kaiser, is supreme overlord! There is a picture of your master!" He pointed with a thumb over his shoulder to the full-length atrocity in oils behind him. "Salute it!"

The boy obeyed.

"Answer now! Who is your master?"

Kazimoto hesitated.

"Answer, I order you!"

He turned and pointed a finger at Fred, who nodded.

"That English *bwana* is my master," he said stoutly.

Fred jumped to his feet.

"That is perfectly correct," he said in English. "The boy is my servant, engaged on British territory, to be paid off in British East at the end of my journey."

"Who asked you to speak?" demanded the lieutenant angrily, sitting up like a startled scorpion. "Do you know what this place is?"

"It looks like a shambles!" Fred answered, indicating the victims of the whip writhing in the name of German justice.

"Shut up, you fool!" counseled Will in a stage whisper, but either Fred did not hear him or was too worked up to care.

"Silence! Sit down!"

"I warn you!" Fred answered. "That boy has claimed British protection. I shall see he has it!"

Then he sat down. The lieutenant glared at Kazimoto, the glare changing to a cold grin as he realized how fully we were all at his mercy for the moment.

"You are sentenced," he said, "to two hundred lashes for making impudent answers to the court and to six months on the chain-gang for deserting from this country and entering foreign service. Other charges against you will be tried on completion of the chain-gang sentence!"

"I protest!" shouted Fred, jumping up again. "I give notice of appeal to whatever higher court there is. I am ready to give bonds!"

"What does this delay mean?" snapped the lieutenant. "Put him down at once and lay the lashes on!"

The unfortunate Kazimoto was pounced on by two *askaris* and thrown face downward on the floor. One of them tore off his clothes, ripping up his good English jacket.

"Did you hear my protest?" shouted Fred. "Did you hear my notice of appeal?"

"I did," said the lieutenant. "Appeals are heard at the coast. You must give notice by mail and receive an acknowledgment from the higher military court before I grant stay of execution. Lay on the lashes!"

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"I will hold you personally liable for this outrage," Fred told him, "if it costs me all my money and all the rest of my years! I defy you to continue!"

"You have yourself to blame!" the lieutenant grinned. "But for your uninvited interruption the Nyamwezi would have had a better hearing! Lay those lashes on harder and more slowly!"

Kazimoto was taking his gruel like a man. Two *askaris* were beating him. The blows fell at random anywhere below the neck and above the heels, raising a great welt where they did not actually cut the skin. He had buried his face in his forearms, and Will had gone to stand near him, stooping down to encourage him with any words at all that might seem to serve.

"Stick it out, Kazi! We'll stand by! We won't leave you down here! Remember you've got friends who won't desert you!"

Probably in his agony Kazimoto did not understand a word of it, but the lieutenant did and swiftly took steps to interfere.

"Call the Europeans' cases next!" he shouted and went through the form of studying the blue papers. Brown was not in court, and we were kept standing until he had been fetched from his tent. He had retired immediately after the hanging to sleep off the effects of his debauch and, being now deprived of the luxury of his flask, arrived between two *askaris* in a volcanic temper. He insulted the lieutenant to begin with.

"You and your Kaiser!" he jeered. "Two of a kind—two ugly squareheads with tin scabbards—and the other worse than which!"

The lieutenant scowled but for the moment chose to ignore the pleasantry.

"YOU people are charged," he said, "with entering German territory otherwise than by a regular road and without reporting at a customs station. Further, with intending to defraud the customs—with carrying and possessing arms without a license—with being in possession of ammunition without a permit—with shooting game without a license—with filibustering—with intentional homicide, in that you shot and killed certain men of the Masai tribe within German territory—with wandering at large without permits and with felonious intent. Do you plead guilty or not guilty?"

We were dumb. It was Brown who spoke and stole from our sails what little wind there might have been.

"Decline to plead!" he shouted boisterously. "You're no judge; you're a pirate! You're not fit to try natives, let alone white men! You're a disgrace—that's what you are!"

"Silence!" roared the lieutenant, banging on the table with his open palm—then with his fist—then with a mallet.

"Silence yourself!" retorted Brown as soon as the hammering ceased. "You ought to be ashamed o' yourself! Your court's a bally disgrace, an' you're the worst thing in it! You and your Kaiser can go to ——, and be —— to both of you!"

"A month in jail for contempt of court and *Majestätsbeleidigung!*" snapped the lieutenant. "Take him away!"

Brown was hustled out expostulating, kicked on the shins by a sergeant when he faced about to argue and shoved into a run by two *askaris*.

"You others had better be careful!" said the lieutenant.

"I've a mind to share Brown's cell!" said Will, but the lieutenant affected not to hear that.

"Since you refuse to plead in this court, you shall be held until the arrival of Major Schünck from the coast. Your arms and ammunition are to be handed over to the *askaris*, who will be sent to the rest-camp to receive them. The *askaris* will search your belongings thoroughly to make sure they have all your weapons. You are ordered confined within the limits of this township, and, if you are detected making any attempt to trespass outside township limits, you will be confined as the Greeks are within the rest-camp under observation.

"The porters you brought into the country are all to be paid their full wages by you until Major Schünck shall have dealt with you; the porters are refused permission to leave Muanza, being needed as witnesses. Next case!"

He scrawled his signature and made a motion with his arm that we should leave court. But we waited until the two Nubian giants had finished flogging Kazimoto, and Will and Fred walked over to give him a few words of comfort. That act of ordinary kindness threw the lieutenant into another fury.

"Bring the Nyamwezi here!" he ordered,

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and the *askaris* hustled him up in front of the table.

"What do you do? Have you no manners? Return proper thanks for the lesson you have received!"

Kazimoto stood silent.

"For God's sake—" Will began.

"Say 'thank-you' to him, Kazimoto!" Fred whispered.

There is no native word for thank you—only a bastard thing introduced by tyrants from Europe who never understood the African contention that the giver rewards himself if his gift is worth anything at all.

"*Asente*," said Kazimoto meekly.

"Why don't you salute? Don't you know where you are?"

"For the love of God salute him!" Will almost shouted.

Kazimoto obeyed.

"Take him and put him on the chain-gang!" ordered the lieutenant. "You Europeans leave the court!"

"I'm no European!" Will shouted back. "Thank the Lord I was born in a country you'll never set foot in!"

"Take them away before I have to make an example of them!" the lieutenant ordered.

Obediently the *askaris* gathered about us and hustled us out into the open, poking at my bandaged wound to get swifter action, and going as far as to threaten us with their hippo-hide whips.

The black men who were to search our belongings tried to induce us to hurry, but we insisted on seeing the iron ring riveted to Kazimoto's neck. The ring had a shackle on it, and through that they passed the long chain that held him prisoner in the midst of a gang of forty men. Nobody washed the wounds on his back. We bought water from a woman who was passing with a great jar on her head and did that much for him.

He was naked. His clothes that the *askaris* had torn from him had been thrown outside the court, and some one had stolen them. Later they gave him a piece of cheap calico to bind round his waist, but during all that hot afternoon he had nothing to keep the sun from his tortured back—nor would they permit us to give him anything.

The mortification of having one's private belongings gone through by black men in uniform was made more exasperating still by the fact that Coutlass and the other Greek and the Goanese were spectators, amusing themselves with comments that came nearer to causing murder than they guessed.

The real motive of the search was evident within two minutes from the commencement. The *askaris* could not read, but they showed a most remarkable affinity for paper that had been written on. They took the guns and ammunition first, but after that they emptied everything from our bags and boxes on to the sand and confiscated every scrap of paper, shaking our books to make sure nothing was left between the leaves.

But they forgot to search our pockets; so they overlooked the letter we had written in code to Monty and had not yet sent away by messenger.

That letter became our most besetting problem. How to find a runner who would take it to British East without betraying us first to the Germans was something we could not guess. Even Fred grew gloomy when we realized there was probably not a native on the whole countryside with sufficient manhood left in him to dare make the attempt.

"What fools we were not to send Kazimoto with it when he begged us to!"

"What worse than fools!"

"What brutes! Think what we might have saved him!"

We were unanimous, but unanimity brought no comfort until we hit on a notion of another sort that did ease our feelings a trifle. Coutlass and his two friends were sitting in the open, where they could have a full view of our doings. Assuming the camping-ground to be equally divided between their party and ours, they were well within our portion. We decided their curiosity was insolent, declared inexorable war and there and then felt better.

Fred went out with a tent-peg and scored in the sand a deep line to denote our boundary.

"Over the other side with you!" Fred ordered.

They refused. He charged at them, and they ran.

"Whichever of you, man or servant, sets a foot on our side of that line shall be a dead-sure hospital case! We'll leave your side of the camp to you!"

"Who made you men rulers of this rest-camp?" Coutlass demanded.

"We did," Fred answered. "We'll fight

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you with bare hands and skin you alive if you trespass!"

"Gassharrimminy!" shouted Coutlass. "By —— you mistake me for a weakling! Wait and see!"

We had to wait a very long and weary time, but we did see. In the days that followed, when my wound festered and I grew too ill to drag myself about, Fred and Will were able to leave me alone in the camp without any fear of a visit from the Greeks. It was not that there was much left worth stealing, but a mere visit from them might have had consequences we could never have offset. Alone, unable to rise, I could not have forced them to leave, and their lingering would surely have been interpreted by the guard, who always watched them from the corner of the road, as evidence of collusion of some sort between them and us.

Just at that time Coutlass, as it happened, would have liked nothing better in the world than the chance to persuade the Germans that he was in our counsels. Fred's mere irritable determination to divide the camp in halves saved us in all human probability from a trap out of which there would have been no escape.

IX

O Thou, Who gavest English speech
To both our Anglo-Saxon breeds
And didst adown all ages teach
That art of crowning words with deeds,
May we, who use the speech, be blest
With bravery, that when shall come
In Thy full time our hour of test—
That promised hour of Christendom—
We may be found, whate'er our need,
How grim soe'er our circumstance,
Unwilling to be fed or freed,
Or fame or fortune to enhance
By flinching from the good begun,
By broken word or serpent plan
Or cruelty in malice done
To helpless beast or subject man.
Amen.

"Speak Ye, and So Do."

THERE was method, of course, behind the difference in treatment extended to us and to the Greeks. The motive for making Coutlass sell his mules and stay within the miserable confines of the rest-camp was to make sure he had money enough to feed himself and to cut off all opportunity for swift escape. Not for a second were the Germans sufficiently unwary to admit collusion with him.

The real ownership of the three mules was left in little doubt when they were sold at public auction and bought in by Schillingschen. Fred and Will attended the auction the day following our scene in court and extracted a lot of amusement from bidding against Schillingschen, compelling him finally to pay a good sum more than the mules were worth.

Coutlass was in a strange predicament. The looting of Brown's cattle had been a bid for fortune on his own account. Yet, by causing us to give chase, he had brought us into the German net more handily than ever they had hoped. So it was reasonable on his part to suppose that, if he could betray us more completely still, he might get rewarded instead of treated as a broken tool.

Yet he did not dare approach our camp, for fear lest Fred should carry out his threat and fight. The fight would certainly be reported by the *askar* on watch at the crossroads, and that would destroy his chance of making believe to be in our confidence. So he kept sending notes to me when the others were absent, fastening the message to a stone and throwing it in through the tent door.

They were strange, illiterate messages, childishly conceived, varying between straight-out offers to help us escape and dark insinuations that he knew of something it would pay us well to investigate.

It was an English missionary, spending three days in Muanza on his way to Lake Tanganika, who came to see what he could do for my wound and cleared up the mystery quite a little by reporting what he had heard in the non-commissioned mess.

"The Greek," he said, "is trying to curry favor by pretending he knows your plans. If he succeeds in worming into your confidence and persuading you to make plans to escape with him, they will feel justified in putting you in jail—and that, I understand, is where they want you."

"Will you do me a favor?" I asked.

He hesitated. It was kindness that had sent him down to ease my pain if possible, not anti-Germanism; it was part of German policy to pose as the friend of all missionaries, and, if anything, he was prejudiced against us—particularly against Brown, whom he had visited in jail and who assured him the only hymn he ever sang was "Beer, glorious beer!"

"That depends," he answered.

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"We are quite sure any letters we write will be opened," I said.

He answered that he could hardly believe that.

"If we could send a letter unopened to British East, it would solve our worst problem," I told him. "If you know of a dependable messenger who would carry our letter, I would contribute fifty pounds out of my own pocket to the funds of your mission."

I made a mistake there and realized it the next moment.

"What kind of letter is worth fifty pounds?" he asked me. "Isn't it something illegal that you fear might get you into worse trouble if opened and read?"

I argued in vain and only made my case worse by citing as an instance of German official turpitude the staff surgeon's neglect of me.

"But he says you are insolent if he happens to be too busy to attend to you at once. He says you refuse to let a native orderly dress your wound!"

He had been entertained to one meal at the commandant's house on the hill and regaled by awful accounts of our ferocity. I did not succeed in inserting as much as the thin end of a different view until he asked me how a man's name could be Professor Schillingschen and his wife's Lady Isobel Saffren Waldon.

"I don't understand about titles," he said. "Shouldn't she take his name, or else he hers—or something?"

I assured him that marriage had never as much as entered the head of either of them.

"They're simply living together," I said. "He's a cynical brute. She's a designing female!"

The missionary mind recoiled and refused to believe me. But, after he had thought the matter over and seen the probability, he swung over to a sort of lame admission that a few more of my statements might perhaps be true.

"I will take your letter, provided I may read it and do not disapprove of its contents," he volunteered.

"That's not unreasonable," I said, "but the letter is in code."

"I should have to see it decoded."

I told him to find Fred and Will. He came on them sitting smoking near the waterfront under the great rock that had been inset with a bronze medallion of Bismarck, and startled them almost into committing an assault on him by saying that he wanted our secret code at once. They had been trying to get tobacco to Brown and sweetmeats to Kazimoto, had failed in both efforts and were short-tempered. He explained after they had insulted him sufficiently, and they walked down to the camp, one on either hand, apologizing all the way. I imagine they had criticized missions of all denominations pretty thoroughly.

In the end he decided not to read the letter at all.

"I have reached the conclusion you three men are gentlemen," he said, "and would not take advantage of me. I will take your letter to Ujiji and send it to the south end of Lake Tanganyika, to be put in the British mail-bag for Mombasa by way of Durban. It will take a long time to reach its destination—perhaps two months; but I will have it registered, and it will undoubtedly get there."

That he kept his word, we had ample proof later on; but I did not bless him particularly fervidly at the time, for he went straight to the doctor and repeated my complaints. He left for Ujiji the next day, and the next result of his friendly inteference was that the doctor refused me any sort of attention at all—even a change of bandages.

Fred and Will did their best for me, but it was little. I read in their faces and in their studied cheerfulness when speaking in my presence that they had made up their minds I was going to lose the number of my mess. They went to the commandant in an effort to secure for me some sort of consideration, but without result; and they wrote at least six letters to the British East African Protectorate Government that we ascertained afterward never reached their destination. They tried to register one letter, but registration was refused.

"Why don't they simply jail us, and have done with it?" Will kept wondering aloud.

"They will when it suits their book," said I. "For the present they scarcely dare. Word might reach the British Government. They are breaking no international law by holding us here and keeping tabs on us."

Before many days I grew unable to leave the hard cork mattress on the camp-bed in Fred's tent. They went again to the commandant, this time determined to force the issue.

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BUT all the commandant did was to send an *askar* twice a day to lean on his rifle in the tent door, leer at me and march away again.

"He comes to see if I'm dead," said I. "It would be inconvenient to have me die in jail; there might be inquiries afterward from British East. After I'm dead and buried, they'll jail you two healthy ones and keep you until you 'blab'!"

"Why don't we straight out tell 'em we don't know a thing about the ivory?" wondered Will.

"Because they wouldn't believe us," Fred answered.

Seven days after the sentry's first call the doctor took to coming in person to look at me. He never except once stepped inside the tent but was satisfied to give me a glance of contempt and go away again. He usually had Schubert trailing in his wake and gave him stern orders about sanitation—which nobody ever carried out. The sanitary conditions of that rest-camp were simply nonexistent until we came there, and we had gone to no pains on the Greek's account.

But the Greeks did us an unexpected good turn, though it looked like making more extra trouble for us at the time. They began to complain of lack of exercise and to grow actually sick for want of it. Because of that and jealousy they raised a clamor about our freedom to go anywhere within township limits as against their strict confinement to the camp. The commandant came down to the camp in person to hear what they had to say and, being in a good humor, saw fit to yield a point. Being a military German, though, he could not do it gracefully.

There was a band attached to the local company of Sudanese—an affair consisting of four native war-drums and two fifes. They knew eight bars of one tune and were proud of it, the fifers blowing with beef and pluck and the drummers thundering native fashion, which means that the only difference between their noise and a thunderstorm was in the tempo.

Day after day, twice a day, whether it rained or shone, it seemed to be the law that this band should patrol the whole township limits, playing its only tune, lifting the roofs of men's heads with its infernal drumming and delighting nobody except the players and the township urchins, who marched in its wake rejoicing.

The Greeks and the Goanese were given leave to march with the band twice a day for the sake of exercise. They refused indignantly. The commandant flew into the rage that is the birthright of all German officials but suddenly checked himself; he had a brilliant idea.

He withdrew the permission and ordered Coutlass and his two friends to march with the band twice daily for the sake of their health, on pain of imprisonment should they refuse.

"And I will prove to you," he said, "that the good German rule is impartial. All aliens awaiting trial and confined within township limits shall march with the band if they are able." As an afterthought he added magnanimously, "Those in the jail, too, provided they have not been sentenced for serious crimes!"

So Coutlass, his Greek friend, the Goanese, Fred, Will and Brown of Lumbwa marched about the town twice daily, at seven in the morning and three in the afternoon, a journey of five miles, Fred and Will making no objection, because it gave them a chance to talk with Brown. There were strict orders against talking, and four *askaris* armed with rifles marched behind to enforce the rule as well as keep guard over Brown. But the drums were so thunderous and the shrill fifes so lusty that the *askaris* could not hear conversation pitched in low tones.

"Brown says," said Fred, returning from the first march, "that he sleeps with only a sheet of corrugated iron between him and the ward where the chain-gang lies. He can talk with Kazimoto when he happens to be on that end of the chain. They've nothing but planks to lie on, any of them.

"He has told me how they're disciplined. One plan is no supper or breakfast, but the champion scheme is the doctor's. On complaint by the *askaris* that a man on the chain has shirked his work or answered back or been obstreperous, the doctor serves him out a handful of strong pills and sees him swallow them. They don't unchain them at night. D'you get the idea?"

"Not yet."

"Every time the man has to go outside, he must wake the whole gang and take them with him! They're weary after working twelve hours at a stretch. After the second or third time up they begin to object pretty strenuously. After the third or fourth

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time he's so unpopular that he'd almost rather die than wake them. Imagine the result and what he suffers!"

Despondency began to have hold of me, and I no longer wished to live. The doctor's momentary daily visits increased my loathing for the crew who tyrannized there in the name of progress, and I could see no way of retaliating. I became seized with a sort of delirious conviction that if only I could die and be out of the way, my friends would be far better able to contrive without me.

There is no convalescence in a mood of that sort, and each morning found me nearer death than the last. Then malaria developed, to give me the finishing touch, and, although strangely enough I grew less instead of more delirious, Fred and Will at last made no secret of their belief that I was doomed.

I myself was as sure of death as they were of dinner and had better appetite for my fate than they for the meal. Then one morning the doctor came earlier than usual. He had Schubert with him, and they both peered through the tent door. I was alone, for Fred and Will were in the other tent. The doctor stepped inside and examined me closely, drawing up the mosquito-net to see my face. I did not trouble to speak to him, or even to open my eyes after the first glimpse. He spoke to Schubert in German, let the net fall again and went away. Schubert spat and rubbed his hands and swung along after him.

Then I heard Will and Fred arguing.

"Don't be a fool!" That was Fred's voice.

"I tell you I'll tell him!"

"Fine thing to tell a poor devil that's dying! Let him die in peace."

"No. He has guts, for I've seen him use 'em. I shall tell him. You wait here."

But they both came in and sat one on either side of my bed.

"Did you hear what that doctor person said to the sergeant-major?" asked Will.

"I don't talk his beastly language," I answered.

"He said you'll be dead by this evening. He told Schubert to go and get the chain-gang and have them dig your grave at noon instead of laying off for dinner. He added they'll have you buried and out of the way by four or five o'clock. Then Schubert asked him——"

"No need to tell him that!" Fred objected.

But Will was watching my face keenly and went on.

"Schubert asked him who was to say whether you are dead or not. What d'you suppose the answer was?"

Fred objected again, but Will waved him aside.

"The answer he gave Schubert was, 'Once he's in the grave and covered with two meters of earth, I shall not hesitate to sign a certificate!' So now you know what to expect!"

Will smiled as he watched me. His face was as keen and calm as Fred's was troubled.

"Take more than his guesswork to put you where he'd like to have you—eh?" he laughed.

And I sat up.

Fred began to grin, too.

"You were right, Will!" he admitted.

It was not anger that swept over me and gave me new strength. Anger, I think, would have hastened the end. It was sudden recognition of my own superiority to the devils who could treat a sick man with so little mercy. It was simple inability in the last recourse to admit myself able to be their victim. Even my leg felt better. I demanded food; and, by the time they returned from their morning march around the township, I had made my boy dress me and was sitting up.

WE DATED the turn of the tide of our fortunes from that hour. Certainly from that day we began to prosper—at first gradually, but after a while in the old swift way that had made all our ventures with Monty such amazingly amusing work.

We saw the chain-gang—Kazimoto last, with a shovel over his shoulder—march away at noon to dig me a grave in the sand close to where they burned the township refuse. Fred and Will went and watched them a while, contriving to slip a paper of snuff into Kazimoto's hand while he rested and let the pick-men labor. Snuff to a Nyamwezi is as comforting as an old sweet pipe to nine white men out of ten.

When Schubert came that evening at five with an old sack to put my body in and plenty of *askaris* to help decide disputes, I was standing up. He could not very well make even himself believe that

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a man who could speak and walk was dead, but he could be immensely enraged by what he was pleased to call my *schweinspiel* —pig-play. He cursed me in every language he knew, including several native ones, and ended by threatening to make sure of me before going to so much trouble a second time.

We enraged him still further by laughing at him, and Fred got out his concertina that for many days past had lain idle. The first few notes of it made me realize more than any other thing what depths of despondency we must have plumbed.

That evening I went to bed like a new man and for the first night for long weeks slept until dawn, awaking hungry. My leg began to mend. Laughter brought good hope. Hope gave us courage. And courage set Fred and Will hunting for a means of escape.

The first discovery they made was that there were footholds cut in the great granite rock in which the Bismarck medallion was set. They climbed it and from the summit could see all Muanza harbor from the shoreline to the island in the distance. Sitting up there, they presently spotted a native *dhow* drawn up with bow to the beach with the indefinable air of rather long disuse.

Resisting the first temptation to hurry along the shore and examine it, they returned to camp to tell me of the find and sent Simba, Kazimoto's understudy, to find out whose the *dhow* was and why it lay there.

Simba came back grinning with the news that the *dhow* belonged to an Indian from British East who had been jailed for smuggling. The *dhow* had been sold to pay his court fine and was now owned by a Punjabee who had bought it as a speculation and repented already of his bargain, because the Germans would grant him no license to use it and nobody else would buy.

They went off again to have another distant view of it and to try and invent some means of inspecting it closely without betraying their purpose. I was already able to walk with the aid of a stick, although not fast enough to keep up with them, and, curiosity taking hold of me, I called two of our servants to give me a supporting arm and limped off to see the grave the chain-gang had recently dug for me.

It was a struggle to get there, but it seemed to me the trip was worth it. I found the grave about a foot too short but otherwise commensurate and sat down on a stone beside it to consider a number of things. A convalescent man sitting beside his own grave may be forgiven for amusing himself with a lot of near-philosophy, and, if I trespassed over the borders of common sense on that occasion, I claim it was not without excuse.

My meditations were disturbed by the arrival on the scene of the very last man I expected. We had been told that Professor Schillingschen had gone off on a journey, leaving his "wife" in the care of the commandant; yet I looked up suddenly to see him standing on the other side of the grave with both hands in the pockets of his knickerbockers and a grin of malevolent amusement showing through the tangled mess of hair that hid his lower face.

"Yours?" he asked.

I nodded.

"A close call! I have seen closer. I have stood so close to the brink of death that the width of an eyelash would have damned me."

"Piffle!" I answered rudely. "How can the already damned be damned again?"

He laughed.

"You are sick still. You are petulant. Never mind. I watched you leave the camp from the top of that hill behind you and followed. We can talk here without being overheard. Send those natives away."

"Certainly not!" I answered, but I reckoned without the fear his hairy presence instilled in them.

"Go!" he said simply in the native tongue, and they ran back to the camp as fast as their legs could carry them.

"There are worse places than the grave," he said, beginning to leer savagely.

His eyes glittered. The thin veneer of his first mock-friendliness was gone utterly.

"I imagine that German colonial life is far worse than death," said I.

"German will be the only rule in Africa," he answered. "You fools of English have set your hopes on the Christian missionary. No weaker backed camel could exist. The German Michael is wiser. Islam is the key to the native mind—Islam and the lash—they understand that! In a few years there will be nothing in Africa that is not German from core to epidermis. As to whether you shall live to see that day or not depends on yourself, my young friend."

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Being quite sure that he had a plan in mind that nothing would prevent him from unfolding, I did not waste words but sat still. There is nothing your bully likes better than to force his victim into a war of words.

"I will be short and blunt with you," he began again. "I know your history. You were in Portuguese Africa with Lord Montdidier. There he came in possession of the secret of Tippoo Tib's ivory; how, I do not yet know, but you shall tell me that presently. You and your friends came with him to Zanzibar, where you made certain inquiries—sufficient to set the Sultan of Zanzibar by the ears. You left Zanzibar for Mombasa, and, for some reason that you shall also tell me presently, Lord Montdidier did not leave the ship at Mombasa but continued the voyage toward London.

"Certain individuals decided that it would be better not to permit Lord Montdidier to reach Europe alive. There were agents charged with the duty of attending to that. It was considered safest to throw him overboard into the Mediterranean; men were ordered by cable to board the ship at Suez. Yet, when the ship reached Suez, nobody knew anything about him. Tell me where he left the ship and why!"

HE GLARED with eyes accustomed to extorting facts from savages, depending on physical weakness so to undermine my will that I would give my secret away, perhaps without knowing it.

I lowered my eyes, not being minded to match the strength of my eye muscles against his. The news that Monty had not reached Suez meant most likely that he had been the victim of foul play, for that steamer was not scheduled to stop anywhere before reaching the Suez Canal. As for the people on the ship knowing nothing about him, they no doubt preferred not to talk to strangers. That sort of news is easily kept under cover for a while. Schillingschen grew angry at my silence and changed his tactics.

"Where did he leave the ship?" he shouted —suddenly—savagely.

I did not answer. He came round to my side of the grave and laid a heavy clenched fist on my shoulder. It seemed to weigh like lead in the weak condition I was in.

"You shall tell me what Lord Montdidier is doing now, or that grave shall resemble in your imagination a bed of roses!"

He seized my neck in a grasp like iron and squeezed it. I rose suddenly and struck him in the stomach with my elbow. Strength had returned more swiftly than I guessed, or perhaps it was indignation at the touch of his fingers. At any rate, he staggered clear of me, and I thought he would assault me now in real earnest. But he must have suspected me of having weapons concealed somewhere. Instead of rushing at me like an angry bull, he calmed himself and laughed.

"You are strong for a man they thought of burying," he said. "Never mind. You shall see reason presently. It is well understood that you and your friends know where Tippoo Tib's ivory is hidden. You imagine you can keep the secret. If you keep it, you shall never make use of it, my young friend. If you choose to tell, you shall be suitably rewarded. Come now—I thought you were going to look for it down in these parts. I admit you fooled me. You simply made a false move to draw attention off from Lord Montdidier. Tell me where he is and what he does—and—or——"

"And what? Or what?" I demanded as insolently as I knew how.

I saw no sense in answering him gently.

"I will show you!"

I had begun to feel weak again, but he offered me an arm, and, since he seemed in no hurry, I was able to struggle along beside him. We took to the main road, and, when we reached the D. O. A. G., he called for a hammock and some porters. Being carried in that way was sheer luxury after the walk in my weak state, and I lay back feeling like a tripper on vacation. I saw Fred and Will climbing down from their observation-post on top of the Bismarck monument, but he did not notice them.

Every German sergeant and every *askar* we passed saluted us with about twice as much respect as I had ever seen them show the commandant; and Schillingschen returned salutes much less carefully than he, merely by a curt nod or one raised finger. Apparently the military feared him, for, when we passed the commandant, who was personally superintending the flogging of two natives in the market-place for not saluting himself, that individual took several paces forward to make sure Schillingschen should see his act of homage.

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Schillingschen, striding beside the hammock, directed our course along the shore-front under palm-trees, planted in rows with meticulous precision. He kept far enough to one side to avoid the charge of being seen walking with me but from time to time tossed me remarks calculated to keep my nerves on edge.

"What I shall show you is by way of warning," was a remark he repeated two or three times. Then: "A native can always be made to talk by flogging him. Some white men need sterner measures!"

We left the commandant's house on the hill far behind and followed the curve of the lake shore toward a rocky promontory with a clump of thick jungle behind it. Fear began to get its work in until the thought came that what he most desired was to make me afraid; then I managed to summon sufficient contempt for him and his tribe to regain my nerve and once more almost enjoy the promenade.

He halted the hammock-bearers at a spot about three hundred yards away from the promontory and, leaving them standing there, turned inland with a hand on my arm to give me support and direction. We followed a path that was fairly well marked out and trodden but rough, and several times I should have fallen but for his help. My legs still refused any sort of strenuous duty.

"The staff-surgeon at this station is a man of ideas," he announced as we rounded a big rock and passed down a narrow glade in the jungle. "He is original. He is not like some of our official fools. He studies."

I refused to seem curious and walked on beside him in silence.

"He studies sleeping sickness. If he can find the key to the solution of that scourge, it will mean promotion for him. He has noticed that the sleeping sickness is always at its worst beside the lake and, putting two and two together like a sensible man, has reached the conclusion that the disease may be propagated in some way in the blood of these things."

We emerged into a clearing in which a pool more than a hundred yards long and nearly as many wide was formed naturally by a hollow in the surface of a great sheet of granite. The pool was fed by a trickle of water from a jumble of rocks at one end. At the other end the bottom of the pond sloped upward gradually so that a ramp of smooth rock was formed, emerging out of shallow water. A stone wall had been built about three feet high to enclose that end of the pond, and all the way along both sides the granite had been broken and chipped until the edges were sheer and unclimbable.

"Look," he said, pointing.

I looked and grew sick. On the ramp, half in the water and half out, lay about a hundred crocodiles basking in the sun, their yellow eyes all open. They were aware of us, for they began to move slowly higher out of water as if they expected something.

"You see that post?" asked Schillingschen.

The stump of a dead tree that he referred to stood up nearly straight out of a crack in the rock a few yards above water-level. The crocodiles all lay nose toward it, some of them twelve or fourteen feet long, some smaller and some very small indeed, all interested to distraction in the dead tree trunk.

"That is where he feeds them," Schillingschen announced. "He has tested them for hearing, smell and eyesight. By making fast a living animal to that post, he has been able to convince himself that from about nine in the morning until five in the afternoon their senses are limited. Only occasionally do they come and take the bait between those hours. They are hungriest in the early morning just before daylight. Recently a large ape tied to the post at midday was not killed and eaten until four next morning, and that is about the usual thing, although not the rule. Now my proposal is——"

HE STEPPED back and eyed me with the coldest look of appraisal I ever sickened under. I blanched—visibly suffered under his eye, and he liked it.

"That you tell your secret or be fastened to that post from noon, say, until the crocodiles make an end of you."

He stepped back a pace further, perhaps to gloat over my discomfort, perhaps from fear of some concealed weapon.

"You have not much time to arrive at your decision!"

He took another pace backward. It occurred to me then that he was looking for some one he expected. Nobody turning up, he began to gather loose stones and throw them at the reptiles, driving them down into

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deep water, first in ones and twos and then by dozens. Most of them swam away to the far side of the pool and hid themselves where it was deep.

Then, panting with having run, there came a native who looked like a Zulu, for he had the enormous thighs and the straight up and down carriage as well as facial characteristics.

"You are late!" shouted Schillingschen in German. "*Warum?* What d'ye mean by it?"

The man opened his mouth wide and made grimaces. He had no tongue. Schillingschen laughed.

"This is a servant who does no tattling in the market-place," he said, turning again toward me. "He and I can tie you to that post easily. What do you say?"

There was nothing whatever to say or to do, except wonder how to circumvent him, and nothing in sight that could possibly turn into a friend—except a little tuft of faded brown that out of the corner of my eye I detected zigzagging toward me in the direction from which we had come. A moment later I knew it really was a friend. Crinkle, a mongrel dog that Fred had adopted the day after our arrival, breasted the low rise, saw me, gave a yelp of delight and came scampering.

The dog sniffed my knee to make sure of me and then trotted over to sniff Schillingschen. The professor stooped down to pat him, rubbed his ear a moment to get the dog's confidence and then seized him suddenly by both hind legs. I saw what he intended too late.

"Stop, or I'll kill you!" I shouted and made a rush at him.

But he swung the yelping dog and hurled him far out into the pool.

A second later my fist crashed into his face, and he staggered backward. A second later yet the dumb Zulu pinned my elbows from behind and set his knee into the small of my back with such terrific force that I yelled with pain. Then Schillingschen approached me and began to try to drive my teeth in with unaccustomed fists. He loosened my front teeth but cut his own knuckles; so he began looking about for a stick.

Strangely enough my own attention was less fixed on Schillingschen than on the wretched Crinkle, swimming frantically for shore. Dog-like he was making straight for me, and there was no possibility whatever of his being able to scramble up the steep side. I shouted to call his attention and tried to motion to him to swim toward shallow water, but the Zulu would not let my arms free, and the dog only thought I was urging him to hurry.

Schillingschen found a stick and came back to give me a hammering with it just at the moment when a crocodile saw Crinkle. A blow landed on my head, cut my forehead and sent the blood down into my eyes at the same moment that I heard the dog's yelp of agony; the next time I looked at the pond, there was a tiny whirlpool on the surface, slightly tinged with red.

"You swine!" I shouted at Schillingschen, trying to break loose and attack him.

For answer he raised his cudgel in both hands and stood on tiptoe to get leverage. If that blow had landed, it must have broken something, for he was strong as a gorilla; but somebody shouted—I recognized Fred's voice, and in another second he and Will charged down on us. Schillingschen turned about to strike Fred instead of me, but Will's fist hit him on the ear and split it. The professor staggered backward, and a moment later Fred had felled the Zulu.

I reeled from weakness and excitement and nearly fell down.

"Throw him to the crocks, you men!" I urged madly. "He threw Crinkle in. Throw him. Nobody'll ever know. He'd have dared throw me in! Nobody comes here. Throw him in and trust the crocks to leave no trace!"

"Shut up, you fool!" growled Fred.

"Did you see him throw that dog in?" I retorted.

"No," he answered; "but I saw him strike you. That's enough. I'll deal with him!"

I suppose Fred intended to knock the professor down and belabor him with the same stick he had used on me, but the plan died still-born. Schillingschen bethought him of his hip pocket, produced a repeating pistol and levelled it.

That ended the battle as far as we were concerned. We had no firearms. Schillingschen beckoned his Zulu and walked off at a great pace, only looking back over his shoulder once or twice to make sure we were not in pursuit.

Fred and Will lent me an arm apiece, and

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we followed slowly, I recounting as fast as I could all that had happened and speculating as to what might happen next.

But nothing happened immediately on our return into the town. Actually Fred and Will had been outside township limits and could be arrested; suspecting foul play as soon as they saw me with Schillingschen, they had followed at once. They were as mystified as I when no swift vengeance lit on them. We saw Schillingschen carried in the hammock up the steep path leading to the commandant's house, but no one came down again.

After we got back to camp, we spent all the rest of that day waiting for the vengeance we felt sure was overdue, but none came. Toward evening we even began to grow hopeful again and to talk about the *dhow*. Fred and Will had examined it through field-glasses from the top of the rock and were optimistic regarding its size and general condition.

"Even if it leaks rather badly," said Will, "we could reach some island and beach it there and calk it."

"How about that launch that brought the professor and Lady Saffren Waldon?" I asked.

"What about it?"

"Couldn't they follow us with that?"

"You bet they could."

"We might steal the launch," suggested Fred, but that was too wild a proposal to be taken seriously.

The launch was the apple of the German Governmental eye, and the engine crew slept on it always.

The prospect was unpromising as ever, yet I went to bed and listened to the strains of Fred's concertina in the next tent with less foreboding than at any time since reaching Muanza and fell asleep to the tune of "Silver Threads Among the Gold," a melancholy piece that Will liked to sing when hope or courage stirred him.

I was awakened near midnight of a moonless, black night by a hand on my bedclothes and the light of a lantern in my eyes.

"Hus-s-s-h!" said some one. "Don't speak yet. Listen."

It was a woman's voice, and a sick man's wits don't work swiftly as a rule when he lies between sleeping and waking.

"Listen; I must come to terms with you three men. I have no friends in Muanza. Those Greeks and that Goanese would sell me to the first bidder, and these Germans are worse than dogs."

"But who are you?" I asked stupidly.

FOR answer she held the lantern so that I could see her face. Her hand trembled, and the unsteady light threw baffling shadows. But, even so, I could see she looked drawn and aged.

"Where is your maid, then, Lady Waldon?" I asked, for it seemed to me that was one friend who had served her through thick and thin.

"Ask the commandant!" she answered. "The poor fool thinks he will marry her. I have not even a servant any longer. I have walked through the shadows from the commandant's house, only lighting this lantern after I was inside the hedge. One watchman was asleep; the others did not see me. As long as those Greeks don't suspect I am here, we can talk safely."

I tumbled out of bed on the far side, and went to waken the other two. After a hurried consultation we decided my tent was the best for the interview, because of the light that had burned in it nearly always while I was so deathly ill. We wrapped ourselves in blankets, and Fred went and shook Simba awake.

"Watch those Greeks!" he ordered him. "If they show signs of life, come and give the alarm."

Then we set Lady Waldon's lantern on the ground in the back of my tent, closed the tent up and foregathered. There was one chair. We three sat on the bed.

"Before we begin," said Fred, "we'd like some kind of proof, Lady Waldon. I've no need to labor the point. Why should we believe you are our friend tonight?"

She sighed.

"I don't expect friendship," she answered. "If I can help you to escape out of the country, I will. If you can help me, you must. If you tell your secret now, they intend to prevent your telling it to any one else afterwards. And, unless you tell, they intend to take terrible steps to compel you!

"As for me—they have discovered that, after all, I know nothing and am of no use to them. They have not said so, but it is very clear to me how the land lies. Professor Schillingschen is drunk tonight; he came home with his ear and mouth bleeding and has plied the whisky bottle freely ever

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since, until he fell asleep an hour and a half ago. He boasted over his cups.

"They are simply using this long wait for Major Schünk, who is supposed to be coming from the coast, to gather additional evidence against you. They have men out following your trail back by the way you came, and, if they can find no genuine evidence, they will invent what they need. The purpose is to get you legally behind the bars; and, if you ever come out again alive, that would not be their fault."

"What do you propose?" asked Fred.

"Escape!" she answered excitedly. Then another thought made her clench her fists. "Is it possible you told Professor Schillingschen your secret today? Did one of you tell him? Is that why he is drunk?"

She saw by our faces that that fear was groundless, but a greater one—that she might not be able to convince us—seized her next. She made such an excited gesture that the shawl she wore over head and shoulders fell away, and her long hair came tumbling down like a witch's.

"Listen. There is nothing that you men from your point of view could say too bad about me. I know. I have been in the pay of Germany for many years, but what you don't know is how they got me in the toils and kept me in, dragging me down from one degradation to another. They have dragged me down so far at last that I am not much more use to them. If we were in British territory, they would simply expose me to the British Government and save themselves the trouble of ending my career.

"They did that to Mrs. Winstin Willoughby and Lord James Rait and fifty others; it was so easy to put incriminating evidence against them in the hands of the public prosecutor. Lord James Rait died in Dartmoor Prison—a common felon. I shall not. But believe me—I am certain as I sit here that they only wait for my return to British East! To have me murdered here might start inconvenient rumors that would lead to unanswerable questions! It was proposed to me today that I should return to British East on the launch!"

"Then why the talk about escaping?" Fred wondered. "Why not go?"

"Because," she hissed emphatically, "my one chance is to escape from their clutches—get into touch with British officials—and tell my own tale first."

Fred was in no hurry to be convinced. I was a sick man, too recently recovered from the gates of death to care to be hard on any one. Will felt as I did, but for another reason: any woman, with or without a hard-luck story, could be sure of his kindly ear.

"I still don't see your danger," Fred told her. "I fail to recall a single instance of the British courts passing a severe sentence on a spy. Lord James Rait got a twenty-year sentence for forgery."

"True!" she answered. "And Mrs. Winstin Willoughby was sentenced to fifteen years for theft! Lord James did forge—in the way of business for the German Government! Jane Winstin Willoughby did steal—for the same blackguard masters! Do you think they will expose me as a spy? That would be too clumsy, even for such bullies as they are. Do you suppose they could have dragged me down to this without some sword held over me? They can prove that I committed a crime in England several years ago.

"Oh, yes, I am a criminal! I raised a check. It was a check on a German bank, given to me by a German on behalf of a countryman of his. I needed money desperately, and the man who brought the check to me suggested I should raise it. Since then I have tried to repay that money with interest a dozen times, but they have always laughed and told me they preferred to leave matters as they are."

"What would be the use of returning to British territory, then?" asked Fred. "If they hold that over you, they can denounce you at any time."

"Not they!" she answered. "Not if I get there first. I know too much. I can tell too much. I can prove too much. If I were once arrested on the charge of raising that check, no Government in the world would listen to me. But, if I can tell my story first and confess about the check and explain why the charge is likely to be brought against me, then there will be Downing Street officials who know how to whisper to the German Embassy words that will frighten them into silence! I can prove too much against the German Government if only I can tell my tale before they crush me!"

"Why not write it?"

"Deluded man," she sneered. "All the letters you have written since you came to Muanza lie in a drawer in the commandant's desk. I myself have read them."

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In the dark, with shifting shadows thrown by the cheap trade lantern, it was difficult to judge what was going on behind that beard of Fred's. I had begun to suspect he was coming over to my way of thinking and would yield to her presently, but he returned to the attack—very directly and abruptly.

"What is it you know against the German Government?" he demanded and sat with his jaw in the palm of his hand waiting for her answer.

"Why should I tell you? Why should I put myself completely in your power?"

"Why not?" asked Fred.

"What would prevent you from stealing my thunder and telling my story as your own—leaving me at the Germans' mercy?"

"Something very potent that I think you would not understand if I talked of it," Fred answered. "Listen to me now a minute. I haven't conferred with my friends here. Whatever I tell you is subject to their agreeing with me. The only condition on which I, for one, would consent to taking part with you in anything—after all our experience of you—would be that you should put yourself completely in our power. On those terms I would be willing to do my best."

"I agree to that like a shot!" said Will, and I nodded.

"You mean——"

"All or nothing!" Fred insisted.

"You mean that you also, just like these Germans, must have a sword to hold over me?"

"I thought you wouldn't understand," Fred answered. "What we demand, Lady Saffren Waldon, is proof that you really do give us your confidence. Without that we have nothing to say to you and nothing to do with you."

SHE broke down then and cried a little, tearing herself with sobs she hated to release. Suddenly she raised her head and glared at us wildly, dry-eyed; not a tear had accompanied the sobbing.

"If I tell you—if you fail me after that—I shall kill myself in such a way that you shall know my blood is on your heads!"

Fred laughed. It was no doubt the best thing to do, but I wondered how he managed it.

"Suppose you begin by telling us," he said. "We can discuss the blood-stains afterwards."

Then she suddenly burst into her tale as if she had rehearsed it a hundred times in readiness to pour it into the ears of the first British official who had power enough to shield her. She told it dramatically, in few words, wasting no breath on side issues and without once pausing to explain, letting her words smash down the barriers of unbelief and pave their own way for explanations afterward.

"Germany is planning to conquer the world—not now, but ten or a dozen years from now! She is getting ready ceaselessly. Part of the plan is to undermine British rule in Africa by means of a religious influence among the natives. That is the special duty of Professor Schillingschen. As soon as possible a great native army is to be trained and thoroughly schooled in the fanatical precepts of Islam. But the German people are too heavily taxed already and refuse to vote money for this miserable colony, where the great beginning must be made because it is only here that they can work unsuspected. So funds must be found in some other way."

She paused for breath. Of one thing I was quite sure: she had found it worth her while to convince us, if that were possible. She was playing no half-hearted game.

"Do you begin to see now why the Germans are so set on finding Tippoo Tib's hoard of ivory? If rumor is one-half true, the Arab buried somewhere enough ivory to finance this plan of theirs. They have been going about the search systematically, and sooner or later they feel they must stumble on it. They will not let you forestall them."

She paused again. Her very earnestness exhausted her more than the walk through the dark in danger had done.

"When I told you in Nairobi that Lord Montdidier had been murdered, I believed I was so near the truth that you would never know the difference. The order had been given to have him killed on board ship—given by men who do not excuse failure on any ground. They feared he might be going to divulge the secret of the ivory to his Government in London. Oh, I tell you they stop at nothing!

"Today London is the ivory market of the world, but they have their arrangements

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made for transferring that center of trade to Hamburg. They mean first to crush competitors and then monopolize. They hope the ivory is in this country. In that case their task will be easy. But, if it should be found in British East, they are all ready with the necessary men of influence to apply for a mining or agricultural concession, and they will fence that place off so thoroughly that no one will ever be the wiser until they have carried the ivory out of the country!"

"They could never get it out of British East without the Government knowing," objected Fred, but she laughed at him.

"If worse came to the worst, they are ready with an offer to exchange ten times the territory elsewhere for just that small section of the country. They would give up German New Guinea or Southwest Africa—anything. They have fooled the French and Russian Governments until they are ready to bring pressure to bear on England diplomatically to induce her to make almost any bargain of that kind that the Germans want.

"They are even willing to concede to England the whole of Abyssinia, which nobody owns yet, and to back her up against the claims of France and Italy! Why should they not be willing to make temporary concessions, when all Africa is to be theirs in ten years' time? They will give today, and, with the help of the money that ivory will bring, they will create an army that shall take away tomorrow."

"But how can you prove all this?" Fred asked her.

"How? I know the names of the men who are preaching Germany's sermons all through British East. I know all Schillingschen's secrets. Why should I not? I have suffered enough. He is a drunken brute nearly always after the sun goes down, and his caresses are disgusting; I have endured them until I know all he knows. Now he realizes that I know his secrets and have none of my own to tell; so he hopes to send me to my doom at the hands of the Government I have betrayed too many times.

"What is the use of my pretending to be better than I am? I am a spy—a traitress—a divorced woman with worse than no reputation! I never would have recanted unless the end of my rope had come. Now I know I must buy my pardon—earn it—pay for it with solid value. Luckily I can do that. I do not ask you men for mercy. I offer to help you to escape in exchange for helping me."

She pointed her finger at me.

"You went out of bounds today with Schillingschen! Well and good; he was with you. But you and you—" she pointed at Fred and Will— "went without permission. Why do you suppose they overlooked such a splendid chance of jailing you legally? Schillingschen came up to the commandant's house in a towering passion, demanding the immediate arrest and close confinement of all three of you. He was only persuaded to wait a few days longer because a runner has come in with word that the bodies of several Masai whom you shot on this side of the German border have been found.

"The bones—the bullets found among the bones—and cartridge-cases that will fit your rifles are being brought to Muanza. After that—the deluge, my friends. That is why Professor Schillingschen gets drunk and sings himself to sleep in spite of your being still at liberty. Either escape before that evidence reaches Muanza or make up your minds for the worst. It is growing late—answer me—do you agree?"

Fred glanced once at each of us. We both nodded.

"We agree, with reservations," he said.

"What are they? Man—don't be a fool! Don't fritter the lives of all of us away."

"They're simple. We've a friend in the jail here. His name's Brown."

"That drunkard? Leave him. He's worthless."

"We've a servant on the chain-gang. His name is Kazimoto."

"A nigger? How absurd! Leave him his wages and tell him to follow when they let him off the chain!"

"And we have a string of porters," Fred continued. "We will not leave Muanza without the porters, our man Kazimoto and Mr. Brown of Lumbwa!"

"You are mad! You are crazy!"

"We are the men you have invited to trust you," Fred answered kindly. "Those are our conditions. We will not 'bate one iota. Take 'em or leave 'em, Lady Waldon."

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Lean, loveless, hungry lanes are these?
The longest has an end.
Ill luck tasted to the bitter lees
Soonest shall mend.
From out the foe's ranks, if Heaven please,
Shall come your friend.
In Hoc Signo Vade.

WE CAME to no fixed decision that night, although we knew there was no alternative. She held out in the vain hope of making us agree to leave at least Kazimoto and Brown behind. The porters, she agreed, might come in very handy, although it was at least doubtful that we should be able to slip out of Muanza by land.

The Germans had taken latterly to counting our porters every morning, to supplying them with ration-money once every day and to sending the bill to us by an *askar*, who waited for the cash. At any rate, she conceded the porters, provided we would leave the two others behind. And, of course, we were adamant.

She left us an hour and a half before dawn, we letting her return alone because of the greater danger of detection if we had tried to escort her. It was after she had gone, while we sat listening for the sound of a challenge that would have ruined all her hopes if not ours, that Will conceived the bright idea which finally saved us.

"The Heinies don't know that we're wise to their game," he said cheerfully. His ears were sticking out from his head, and he had the naughty boy look that always presaged wisdom. "Why don't we play that card for all it's worth?"

"We need five cards to make even a poker hand," Fred objected.

"Will a full house suit you—aces and queens?" he answered. "I've named you an ace already. Ace number two is the fact that these German officials are brutes pure and simple—brutes who don't understand how to be anything else, with brutal low cunning and no other cleverness."

"That sounds like the joker," said Fred.

"It's ace number two, I tell you. The third is the fact that Brown of Lumbwa can talk with Kazimoto in the night through that corrugated iron partition. Three aces—count 'em—one, two, three! Queens? One of 'em left this tent a few minutes ago. The other's the *dhow*. We'll call that blessed boat the *Queen of Sheba* for luck. The Queen of Sheba got to her journey's end and found more than she expected, and, by the lights of little old Broadway, so shall we! I've dealt the cards—is it up to me to play them?"

"Your hand, America! Talk it over first, though. There's an awful lot hangs on the game," said Fred.

I fell asleep while they argued over the points of Will's strategy. Africa is a land of sudden death and swift recoveries, but for a convalescent man I had been through a strenuous day and had right to be tired out. It was broad daylight when I awoke, and breakfast was ready. Fred and Will had returned from their march around the township with the native band, and to my surprize the commandant was standing in front of their tent, talking with them. I threw on a jacket and joined them at table.

"I don't understand you," said the commandant. "Either talk German or speak more slowly."

Will took a purchase on his stock of patience and began again.

"If our porters run away, you'll blame us. We don't care to be blamed for what is none of our fault. So, if you don't put 'em all on a chain and lock 'em up nights, we're going to discontinue paying for their keep. That's flat, so I hope you get our meaning. You can work 'em if you like. Let 'em help keep the township clean. We'll pay their board and wages as long as you're responsible for their not escaping.

"And say—if you want to get real work out of 'em, I'll give you a tip. There never was a savage like that Kazimoto of ours for getting results out of that gang. Put him on the same chain with the lot of 'em, and we'll all be satisfied. I don't presume to be running your jail, but I'm telling you facts that'll hurt nobody. Those porters 'ud be a darn sight better off with plenty of exercise."

"Do I understand you to ask that your porters be made prisoners?" asked the commandant.

"You get me exactly," said Will.

The commandant grunted, nodded, waited for us to get up and salute him, grunted again with disgust when we did nothing of the sort, turned on his heel and walked off. We spent an hour on tenterhooks, but at the end of an hour we saw the porters rounded up and a chain fetched out that was long enough to hold them all.

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They disappeared within the *boma* wall. Ten minutes later Will pointed suddenly toward the southward.

"Look! See what happens when the roofs of shantytown take fire!"

Flames went up suddenly from the dry grass roof of one of the rectangular Swahili huts. Within thirty seconds the *askaris* on guard at the *boma* began firing their rifles in the air as fast as they could pull the trigger and reload. Within two minutes the chain-gang was headed for jail, where it was locked behind doors in order that every *askar* in Muanza might be free to pile arms and hurry to the fire.

It was not only *askaris;* the whole township turned out as to the circus, with Schubert and his long *kiboko* ruling the riot. The other sergeants were in evidence, plying their *kibokos* without wasting words, stirring the whole world within their reach into action—if not orderly and purposeful, action at least.

Schubert climbed on a roof well to windward and safe from the sparks and directed proceedings in a voice that outthundered the mob's roar and crackling flames. To illustrate his meaning, he seized handfuls of the thatch on which he stood and tore them out, to the huge discontent of the owner. The crowd saw what he wanted and began at once tearing off roofs in a wide circle around the fire so as to isolate it, Schubert demonstrating until scarcely a handful of thatch remained on the roof he honored and he had to stand awkwardly on the criss-cross poles, while the owner and his women wept.

Within ten minutes after the commencement of the fire, there was under weigh a regular orgy of roof-pulling. Whoever had an enemy ran and tore his roof off, and there were several instances of reciprocity, two families tearing off each other's roof, each believing the other to be at the fire.

Muanza was a furious place—a riot—a home of din and tumult, and, when the fire was put out, it took another hour to stop the fights between victims of the unofficial salvage-men.

"D'ye get the idea of it?" asked Will. "D'ye see the Achilles heel?"

In that second, I believe, Fred Oakes and I betrayed ourselves genuine adventurers. Any fool could have talked glibly about setting the town on fire; any coward could have yelped about the danger of it and improbability of success. It needed adventurers to size up instantly all the odds against the idea, recognize the one infinitesimal chance and plumb for it.

"It's the only chance we've got," agreed Fred. "It's slim, but lead on, America."

"I believe we can pull it off," said I. "I'm game."

After that it seemed like waste of time to talk; yet every single detail of our plan had to be thought out beforehand and mentally rehearsed if we hoped to have even the one slim chance we built on. Luckily Professor Schillingschen continued drunk, which meant that he would sleep early and give Lady Waldon another chance to pay us a nocturnal visit. One of our boys told us that according to market gossips the commandant was drinking with him and the two of them were watching a sort of native nautch dance they had staged in seclusion on the hill.

The next day we learned there was to be a murder trial of no less than nine men—an event likely to keep the whole garrison's attention drawn away from us. And after the trial would come the hanging—for verdict and sentence were foregone conclusions. The stars in their courses appeared to be on our side. For several nights to come the worst the moon could do would be to show a sliver of silver crescent for an hour or two.

LADY WALDON came earlier that night. When we outlined our plan to her, she argued against it at first—said it was impossible—far-fetched—ridiculous. She insisted again on our simply sneaking away by night with her. But Fred took the upper hand.

"Take us or leave us, Lady Waldon, as we are. We've agreed to Mr. Yerkes' plan, and you've got to obey him implicitly if you want to have part with us. We will not leave our men or Brown of Lumbwa behind, and we will not change the plan by a hair's-breadth. Will you or won't you obey?"

She yielded then very quickly. It seemed a relief to her at last to subject her views to those of men whose purpose was merely honest. Will took up the reins at once.

"We've talked over buying the boat," he said, "but that's hopeless. The more we paid for it, the louder the owner would brag. The Germans would be 'on' in a

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minute. We've simply got to steal it. It's up to you to find out the man's proper name and address, and we'll send him the money from the first British post-office we reach."

"*Don Quixote de la Mancha!*" she said critically. "Well—we steal the boat and you pay for it afterward. The owner will think you are crazy, and, if the Germans ever discover it, they will take the money away from him. But go on."

"We've plenty of money," said Will, "but we'll need rations until we reach some place where more are to be bought. And we've got to get them on board the *dhow* secretly. The first question is how to do that."

She told us at once of a path going round by the back of the hill behind us that would make the trip to the *dhow* in the dark a matter of over two miles, but that avoided all sentries and habitations. We agreed that all three of us should climb to the top of the hill, which was not out of bounds, and study the track next morning.

"We'll talk to Brown of Lumbwa on the morning and afternoon march around the township," Will went on. "Brown must whisper to Kazimoto through the corrugated iron partition in the jail at night and have them all ready to break loose at the signal and bring him along with them."

"What is to be the signal?" she asked.

"A fire-alarm on the first windy night! The next question is who is to start the fire. We'll need a good one! Yet, if we do it, we're likely to be caught by the crowd coming running to deal with it."

"Coutlass!" she answered suddenly. "Coutlass and his two friends."

"You'll perhaps pardon me," Fred answered, "but none of us would trust those Greeks as far as a hen could swim in alcohol."

"Yet you must. Leave them to me. They don't know that the sand in my glass has run down. I will tell them that the Germans want a good excuse for putting you three men in jail, and that they will be sent away free as a reward if they will start a fire and charge you afterward with arson. I will tell them to choose the first windy night.

"Better arrange a signal," Will advised. "They might fire before we were ready."

"Very well. You men give me the word at midday of the day of the start, and I will spread red, white and blue laundry on the roof of the commandant's house for the Greeks to see."

"Good enough," agreed Will. "Now one more stunt. We simply must have firearms. At a pinch I suppose we could manage with one rifle, provided we had lots of ammunition. One we must have. What about it?"

She thought for several minutes. At last she told us that one of the commandant's rifles and one of Schillingschen's stood leaning in a corner of the living-room beside a bookcase. Whether she could make away with one or both of those without detection, she did not know, and she would have to use her wits regarding ammunition. It was always kept locked up.

"Why not kill an *askar* and take his rifle and cartridges?" she asked. "The sentry on duty watching the Greeks will be in the way. Knock him on the head from behind."

"Thank you," grinned Will, exchanging glances with us. "We shall have about enough on our consciences setting fire to half the township. We'll not kill except in self-defense."

"But you won't set the town on fire. The Greeks will do that."

"Don't let's argue ethics," Fred interrupted, for Will's ears were getting red. "Can you tell us for certain, Lady Waldon, whether all the *askaris* and German sergeants really run to a fire? Or do a certain number remain in the *boma?*"

"Oh, I know about that," she answered. "Until the prisoners are all locked in—that is to say, in case of fire in the daytime—six or eight *askaris* remain inside the *boma*. The minute they are locked in, if the fire is serious, and in case of fire by night, they all go—except two who stand on the eastern *boma* wall, one at each corner. From there they are supposed to be able to see on every side except the water-front. Nobody guards the water-front; I don't know why, unless it is that the gate on that side is kept locked almost always and the wall runs along the water's edge."

"As a matter of fact," said I, "those two sentries on the wall will be too busy staring at the fire, if the Greeks really make a big one, to see anything else unless we march by under their noses with a brass band."

"Bah!" sneered Lady Waldon. "If I get that rifle, I would dare shoot them both for you myself."

"If you overstep one detail of Will's plan,

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I guarantee to put you ashore on the first barren island we come to," said Fred. "Leave shooting to us."

The next problem was to draw away from the Greeks the attention of the *askar* at the crossroads. We could not see him, for it was one of those black African nights when the stars look like tiny pin-pricks and there are no shadows because all is dark. To go out and look at what he was doing would have been to arouse his suspicion. Yet there was always a chance that he might be patroling down near the Greek camp; doubtless acting on orders, he had a trick of approaching their tents very closely every once in a while.

So, when Lady Waldon had slipped out into the darkness, we lit half a dozen lamps and started a concert, Fred playing and we singing the sort of tunes that black men love. He took the bait, hook, sinker and all; in the silence at the end of the first song we heard his butt ground on the gravel just beyond the cactus hedge in front of us—and there he stayed, we entertaining him for an hour. By that time we were quite sure that Lady Waldon had passed along the road behind him; so Fred went out and gave him tobacco.

"It's time you went and looked at those Greeks again," he advised him. "You would be in trouble if they slipped away in the night."

Now that a plan of campaign was finally decided on, there seemed much less to do than we had feared. Mapping out in our minds the way round the back of the hill to the *dhow* was perfectly simple; we went and smoked on the hilltop, and within an hour after breakfast had every turn and twist memorized. Fred drew a chart of the track for safety's sake.

PERSUADING Brown of Lumbwa unexpectedly proved to be much the most difficult task. Added to the fact that the *askaris* who marched behind and the Greeks who marched in front proved unusually inquisitive, Brown himself was afraid.

"We'll all be shot in the dark," he objected.

"Which would you rather," Will asked him; "be shot in the dark with a run for your money, or be fed to the crocks in the doctor's pond?" And he told him about the crocodiles to encourage him.

"They'll have to let me out of jail at the end of the month," Brown argued.

"Don't you believe it. In less than a week from now we'll all be in on one and the same charge of filibustering. They'll not let you go back to British East to tell tales about their treatment of the rest of us," Will assured him.

But Brown proved tinged with a little streak of yellow somewhere. It was not until the afternoon march that Fred and Will, one on either side of him, by appeals to his racial instinct and recalling the methods of the military court, induced him to do his part. Once having promised, he vowed he would see the thing through to the end. But he was the weak link; he was afraid, and he disbelieved in the wisdom of the attempt.

It was Kazimoto in the end who kept Brown up to the mark and shamed him into action by superior courage. Fred found a chance to speak to him as the long string rested at noon under the narrow shade of a cactus hedge and warned him in about fifty words of what was intended. The *askaris*, almost as leg-weary as the gang, were sprawling at the far end of the line, gambling at pitch-and-toss.

"Be sure you sleep as near to the partition as you can. Get details of the plan from Mr. Brown and then drill the porters one by one. Don't let them tell one another. You tell each one of them yourself."

Then he walked down the line and ordered the porters in a loud voice to obey the *askaris* implicitly and to work harder in return for the good food and care they were getting, winking at the same time very emphatically with the eye the *askaris* could not see.

The night work was the hardest, because, although we were quite sure about direction even in the dark, it was another matter to feel our way and carry unaccustomed loads. By day we decided what to take and what to leave behind, and we cut down what to take with us to the irreducible, dangerous minimum. Then we broke that up into thirty or forty-pound packages so that when we all three made the trip to the *dhow* the most we took at one time was about a hundred pounds weight.

In the condition I was in, I could take not more than one trip to the others' two; after the first it was agreed that I would better stay behind and keep an eye on the *askar*. The minute he showed symptoms

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of becoming inquisitive, I was to invent some way of keeping his attention; so, all unsuspected by him, I lay in the sand by the roadside within three yards of him, while the ants crawled over me and he dozed, leaning on his rifle.

Once a long snake crawled over my wrist, and my very marrow curdled with fear and loathing; but, except for mosquitos, who were legion and sucked their fill, there was no other contretemps. I don't know what I should have done if the *askar* had taken alarm and set off to investigate. I trusted to intuition should that happen.

The work of arranging the stuff in the *dhow* was difficult because we dared not light a lantern, yet we also dared not stow things carelessly for fear of confusion when the hour of action came. The space was ridiculously small for ourselves and all those men, and every inch had to be economized. In addition to that, the *dhow* had to be worked backward off the mud far enough to be shoved off easily and then made fast by a rope to the bushes in such way as not to be noticeable.

Most of the ropes turned out to be rather rotten, and we could only guess at the condition of the sails; the feel of them in the dark gave us small assurance. But fortunately we had a couple of hundred feet of good half-inch manila in camp with us, and that Fred and Will took out and stowed in the hold the night following.

We bought such things at the D. O. A. G. as we could without arousing suspicion, as, for instance, a quantity of German dried pea-soup—not that the porters would take to it kindly, but it would go a long way among them at a pinch. Live stock we did not dare buy, for fear of the noise it would make; but we laid in some eggs and bananas. Most of the thirty-pound loads were rice.

It troubled us sorely to leave our good tents, beds and equipment behind, yet all we could take were the blankets and one Gladstone bag packed with clothes for us all. Kettles and pots and pans were a noisy nuisance, yet we had to have them. And blankets for all those porters, who would escape from jail practically naked, were an essential; but fortunately we had a sixty-pound bale of trade-blankets among our loads.

Not one word did we exchange all this while with Coutlass and his friends. Not one overture did we make to them, or they to us. But there was no doubt of their intention to do their worst. They gloated over us—eyed us with lofty disdain and scornful superior knowledge. They were so full of the notion of having us jailed for their misdeed that they positively ached to come and jeer at us and, I believe, were only saved from doing that by the shortness of the time.

At last, three days after decision had been reached, we threw our blankets with a red one uppermost over the top of both tents in the sun; and within thirty minutes after that Lady Saffren Waldon had spread on the commandant's roof a blue cotton dress, a white petticoat and a blazing red piece of silken stuff.

There and then the Greeks and the Goanese pledged one another out in the open with copious drafts in turn from the neck of one whisky bottle, and we began to pray they might not get too drunk before night. Judging by their meaning glances at us, they considered us their mortal and cruel enemies whom it would be an act of sublime virtue to bring to book.

The trial of the natives for murder had taken place, accompanied by the usual amount of thrashing of witnesses and the usual stir throughout the countryside. These were charged with having murdered an *askar* near their village—a big bully sent to arrest a man, who had taken leave to help himself to more than rations and had made a lot too free with the village women. So German military honor had to be upheld exemplarily. Condign vengeance was sure and swift. The execution was to take place on the drill-ground on the day we chose for our departure.

There was no risk of investigations that day. Had we known it, we could have gone away in all likelihood in broad daylight, so busy was the garrison marshaling into place and policing the swarms of villagers brought in from as far as sixty miles away to witness German justice. Even the customary parade of the band was canceled for that occasion, and that was our only real ground for uneasiness, for it prevented our having a last talk with Brown of Lumbwa and assuring ourselves that courage would not fail him in the pinch.

We had a thousand scares—a thousand doubts—and overlooked at least a thousand evidences that fortune favored us. Toward

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the end our hearts turned to water at the thought that Kazimoto would probably fail to do his part, although why we should have doubted him after his faithful record we would have found it hard to say.

Several times that morning we showed ourselves about the town, with the purpose of allaying any possible suspicion and saving the authorities the trouble of asking what we were up to. With the same end in view we attended the execution in the afternoon and sincerely wished before it was over that we had stayed away.

On this occasion even the chain-gangs were included among the spectators—in the front row—on the ground that, being proven criminals, they needed the lesson more than the hempen-noose-food not yet caught and tried and brought to book.

The same sort of sermon, only this time more fiery and full of ranting humbug about German righteousness, was preached by the commandant. The miserable victims had received a simple death-sentence, but he explained that in virtue of his superior office he had seen fit to add to it.

"Death," he explained, "would certainly rid the German protectorate of such conscienceless scallawags as these but might not be enough to discourage the bad element that dislike German rule. Natives must be taught that the very name of all that is German must be reverenced and that German punishment is as terrible and sure as the German arm is long. And be sure of this," he continued: "The ear of the German Government is as far-reaching as its arm! In your villages—in your homes—in your families—there is always an agent of the Government listening!

"Your own brother—your wife—your child may be that agent of the Government! Now watch carefully and see what happens to men with bad hearts—aye, and to women with bad hearts—who conspire against German rule!"

ONE at a time, that the last might see the torture of the first, the victims were noosed by the heel—one heel—thrown with a jerk—hauled heel first to the overhanging branch—and flogged into unconsciousness with slow blows, the lieutenant standing by to reprove the *askaris* if they struck too fast, for that would have been merciful. Not until the victims ceased to struggle were they lowered and thrown on the ground, to lie bleeding, awaiting their turn to be hanged.

The last two—supposed to have been the culprits who actually held the spear that pierced the marauding *askar's* heart—were hauled up heel-to-heel together and hanged presently in the same noose, the commandant laughing at their struggles and Professor Schillingschen studying their agony with strictly scientific interest.

When the last had ceased struggling, Schillingschen permitted himself one more pleasure. He strolled over to us and blocked Fred's way, standing with hands behind him and outthrust chin.

"You flatter yourself, don't you!" he sneered. He was just drunk enough to be boastful, while thoroughly sure of what he was saying. "You expect to tell a fine tale! I know the psychology of the English! I know it like a book! Let me tell you two things: first, your English would not believe you. They are such supremely cock-sure fools that they can not be made to believe that another nation would act as they, in their egoism, would be ashamed to act!

"Second, you will never tell the story! Being English, you were such dull-witted fools that you did not even hide the cartridge-cases or the bones of the Masai you shot! Bah-ha-ha-ha-hah! You can escape hanging yet by telling your secret. Jail you can not escape! Try it if you don't believe me! Try to escape—go on!"

He turned on his heel and left us, striding heavily with the strength of a traction-engine, turning his head every once in a while to enjoy the spectacle of our discomfiture.

We judged it best to appear concerned, as if that was indeed our first realization of the extent of the case against us and the nature of the evidence. But we did not find it difficult. We were all three startled by the fear that in some way he had got wind of our plans and that he meant to play with us cat-and-mouse fashion.

That night it stormed—not rain, but wind from east to west, blowing such clouds of dust that one could scarcely see across the narrow streets. Every element favored us. Even the *askar* at the crossroads, supposed to be watching the Greeks, turned his back to the wind and, what with rubbing sand in and out of smarting eyes and fingering it out of his ears, heard and saw nothing. It was scarcely sunset when we saw Greeks and

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Goanese sneak out of the camping-place in Indian file with their pockets full of cotton-waste. They had soaked the stuff in kerosene right under our eyes that afternoon.

There ought to have been a sliver of moon, but the wind and dust hid it. Fifteen minutes after sundown the only light was from the lamps in windows and the cooking-fires glowing in the open here and there. Thirty minutes later there began to be a red glow in three directions.

Less than one second after we saw the first indications of the holocaust, a regular volley of shots broke out from the *boma* as the sentries on duty gave the general alarm. Less than five minutes after that the whole of the southern, grass-roofed section of the town was going up in flames, and every living man, black, white, gray, mulatto, brown and mixed, was running full-pelt to the scene of action.

We waited ten minutes longer, rather expecting the Greeks to double back and begin denouncing us at once. In that case we intended to stretch them out with the first weapons handy. I sat feeling the weight of an ax and wondering just how hard I could hit a Greek's head with the back of it without killing him. Fred had a long tent-peg. Will chose a wooden mallet that our porters carried to help in pitching tents.

But the Greeks did not come, and there streamed such a perfect screen of crimson dust, sparkling in the reflected blaze and more beautiful than all the fireworks ever loosed off at a coronation, that it was folly to linger. We each seized the load left for that last trip—Fred's included the hammer, pincers and cold chisel for striking off the porters' chain—and started off quietly round the hill, not beginning to hurry until the hill lay between us and the burning town.

There was not much need for caution. The roar of flames, the shouting, the excitement would have protected us whatever noise we made, however openly we ran. Over and above the tumult we could hear Schubert's bull-throated bellowing and then the echo to him as the sergeants took the shout up all together, ordering:

"Off with the grass roofs! Off with the roofs!"

The white officials had no time for anything but the blaze. As we crossed the shoulder of the far side of the hill, we could see them standing on the drill-ground all together, clearly defined against the crimson flame. Schillingschen was with them.

There was no sign of what had happened at the *boma*. The gang would have to emerge from a little-used gate at the northern end, provided they could break the lock or secure the key to it; otherwise their only chance was to climb the wall by the cook-house roof and jump twenty feet on the far side. I was for running to the little gate and bursting it in from the outside, but Fred damned me for a mutineer between his panting for breath, and Will, who was longer-winded, agreed with him.

"Have to leave their end of the plan to them! Let's do our part right!"

As it turned out, we were last at the rendezvous. We heard the chain clanking in the dark just ahead of us and, try how we might, could not catch up. Then, near the boat bow, Kazimoto suddenly recognized Fred and nearly throttled him in a fierce embrace, releasing all his pent-up rage, agony, resentment, misery, fear in one paroxysm of affection for the man who cared enough to run risks for the sake of rescuing him. Fred had to pry him off by main force.

"Into the boat with you!" Will ordered them. "Chain-gang first! Get down below and lie down. The first head that shows shall be hit with a club. Quickly now!"

Clanking their infernal chain like all the ghosts from all the haunted granges of the Old World, they climbed overside and disappeared. There were more figures left on shore then than we expected. Brown we could make out dimly in the dark; he was chattering nervously and admitted that but for Kazimoto he would not be there. The faithful fellow had broken down the corrugated iron partition and had dragged him out by main force. He was rather resentful than grateful.

"Hauled here by a nigger—think of it!"

We ordered Brown on board and below pretty peremptorily. Lady Saffren Waldon stepped out of the darkness next, holding a rifle and two bandoliers so full of cartridges that she could hardly raise her arms. We took the load from her and helped her overside. Fred took the rifle and succumbed to the hunter's habit of opening the breach first thing.

It was a German sporting Mauser with

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hair-trigger attachment and magazine, as handy and useful a weapon as the heart of man could wish. He had scarcely snapped the breech to again when a voice we all recognized made the hair rise on my neck. Fred jumped and raised the rifle. Will swore softly—endlessly.

"Gassharrrrammminy! You men took us for —— fools, didn't you! You thought to get away and leave us! By ——, no! We go, or you stay! Birds of a feather fly together! One of you is American—I am American! Two of you are English—I am English and can prove it! My friends come with me!"

Fred leveled the rifle at him.

"About face! Off back to town with you!" he barked.

"Not on your tintype!" Coutlass yelled. "I'm no man's popinjay! Shoot if you dare, and I'll spoil the whole game! Help! He-e-e-lp! He-e-e-e-lp!"

THE other Greek and the Goanese joined in the shout, the dark man setting up such an ululating screech that the very storm dwindled into second place in comparison. It was true, the unearthly yelling was carried out over the water, and very likely not a sound of it reached twenty yards inland; but it rattled our nerves nevertheless. The skin grew prickly all up and down my back-bone, and the men on the chain-gang inside the hull began shouting to know what the matter was.

Will remembered then that he was captain for the day and made virtue of necessity.

"In with you!" he ordered. "Quick!"

With a grin that was half triumph, half cunning and wholly glad, Coutlass helped his companions over the bow and had the civility to stand there with hand outstretched to help us in after him. We sent him below with his friends, but he came up again and insisted on leaning his weight on the poles with which we began shoving off into deeper water. It was hard work, for, with her human cargo and several hundred gallons of water that had leaked through her gaping seams, the *dhow* was down several inches. Her hull had just begun to feel the wind and to rise and fall freely when a white figure ran screaming down toward the water's edge and stood there waving to us frantically.

"Leave her!" said Lady Waldon excitedly, clutching my arm. I was up on the bow, just about to lay the pole along the deck and haul on the halyards. She spoke very slowly right in my ear. "That is my maid Rebecca. The faithless slut——"

Coutlass began to shout, trying to pole the *dhow* back to land single-handed.

"We can't leave that woman behind there!" Fred shouted, hardly making himself heard against the wind.

"Can't we!" shouted Lady Waldon. "Give me that rifle, and I'll solve the problem for you!"

But Coutlass solved it in another way by jumping overboard, over his head in deep water, taking our hempen warp with him—I had made one end of it fast to the bitts, meaning to be able to find it in the dark.

There was quite a sea running, even as close inshore as that, and for a moment I doubted whether the Greek would make it. By that time it was all we could do to see the woman's white figure, still gesticulating and screaming like a mad thing. Presently, however, the warp tightened, and then by the strain on it I knew that Coutlass was trying to haul us back inshore. Failing to do that, for the strength of the wind was increasing, he seized the Syrian woman by the waist and plunged into the water with her.

I saw them disappear and hauled on the warp hand-over-hand with all my might, Lady Waldon leaning over to strike at my hands and prevent me until I shouted to Fred to come and hold her. Then she begged Fred again for the rifle, promising to kill the two of them and reduce our problem to that extent if we would only let her.

Will and I hauled the dripping pair on board, and Coutlass carried the maid to the stern. She had fainted, either from fright or from being half drowned; there was no guessing which. Then in pitch blackness with Will's help I got the ship beam to the wind and began to make sail.

Now danger was only just beginning! I was the only one of them all who knew anything whatever about sails and sailing. I was too weak to get the sail up single-handed, had no compass, knew nothing whatever of the rocks and shoals—except by rumor that there were plenty of both. There appeared to be no way of reefing the lateen sail, which was made of no better material than calico, and I was entirely unfamiliar with the rigging.

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One point in my favor I did have. Behind us, as we payed before the gaining wind, was a brilliant blaze that showed where Muanza was. Against the blaze stood out the lakeward *boma* wall. I stood due east away from it and discovered presently that by easing on the halyard so as to lower the long spar I could obtain something the effect of reefing.

I set Fred and Will to making a sea-anchor of buckets and spars, in case the sail or rotten rigging should carry away, leaving us at the mercy of the short, steep waves that fresh-water lakes and the North Sea only know. The big curved spar, now that it was hanging low, bucked and swung; the *dhow* steered like an omnibus on slippery pavement.

Luckily I had living ballast and could trim the ship how I chose. They all began to be seasick, but I gave them something to think about by making them shift backward and forward and from side to side until I found which way the *dhow* rode easiest.

When Fred had finished the sea-anchor, he got out the tools and began striking off the iron rings on the porters' necks through which the chain passed. The job took him two hours, but, at the end of it, we owned a good serviceable chain and a crew that could be drilled to take the brute hard labor off our shoulders.

Coutlass meanwhile was busy on the seat in the stern beside me making Hellenic, inflammatory love to Lady Waldon's maid, whom he had wrapped in his own blanket and held shivering in his arms. Lady Waldon herself sat on the other side of me, affecting not to be aware of the existence of either of them. The other Greek and the Goanese had been driven below, where they started to smoke until I saw the glow of their pipes and shouted to Will to stop that foolishness.

He snatched both pipes and threw them overboard. The thought of being seen from shore was almost incitement enough for murder. They refused to turn a hand to anything that night but sat sulking below the sloping roof of reeds and tarpaulin that did duty for a deck, wedged alongside of seasick Nyamwezi.

It was Kazimoto who chose the least disheartened of the gang, beat them and stung them into liveliness and set them to bailing. There was a trough running thwartwise of the ship, into which the water had to be lifted from the midship well. It took the gang of eight men, working in relays, until nearly dawn to get the water out of her; and to keep her bottom reasonably dry after that needed two men working constantly.

I knew vaguely that the great island of Ukerewe lay to the northwestward of us. Between that and the mainland, running roughly north, was a passage that narrowed in more than one place to less than a hundred yards. That would have been the obvious course to take had we not been afraid of pursuit; had we dared get away by daylight—and provided I had known the way. As it was, I intended to add another hundred miles to the distance between us and the northern shore of the lake by sailing well clear of and around Ukerewe, trusting to the less frequented water and the wilder islands to make escape easier.

I judged it likely that the moment we were missed the launch would be sent off in search of us and that the Germans would search the narrow passage first. They would expect us to take the narrow passage as the shortest and depend on their ability to steam a dozen miles an hour to overhaul us even should we get a long start on the outside course.

With gaining wind, a following sea, a little ship crowded to suffocation and a sail that might blow to shreds at any minute, it was not long before I began to pray for the lee of Ukerewe and to stand in closer toward where I judged the end of the island ought to be than perhaps I should have done. It was lucky, though, that I did.

In making calculations, I had overlooked the obvious fact that, steaming three miles to our one, the launch could very well afford to take the outside course to start with. Then they could take a good look for us in the open water next morning and, failing to find us, steam all around Ukerewe, come back down the inside passage and catch us between two banks.

It was Lady Saffren Waldon on my left hand, looking anywhere but at her maid and sweeping the dark waste of water with eyes as restless as the waves themselves, who gave the first alarm.

"What is that light?" she asked me.

Following the direction of her hand, I saw a red glow on the water to our left, not more than a mile behind.

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"Reflection from the burning town," I answered, but I had no sooner said it than I knew the answer was foolish.

It was the glow that rides above hot steamer funnels in the night.

"Fred!" I shouted, for fear took hold of the very roots of my heart. "For the love of God make every one keep silence! Show no lights! Don't speak above a whisper! Keep all heads below the gunwale! That cursed German launch is after us!"

We were in danger. I could hear surf pounding on rocks to starboard. I did not dare come up into the wind, because nobody but I knew how the spar would have to be passed around the mast, and in any case the noise and the fluttering sail might attract attention.

"Look out for breakers ahead!" I ordered. "I'm going to hold this course and hope they pass us in the dark!"

XI

Be glad if ye know the accursed thing
And know it accurst, for the Gift is yours
Of sight where the prophets of blindness sing
By the brink of death. And the gift endures;
Ye shall see the last of the sharpened lies
That rivet privilege's gripe.
Be still, then, ye with the opened eyes;
Come away from the thing till the time is ripe.

Be glad that ye loathe the accursed thing;
It is given to you to foreknow the end.
But they who the unwise challenge fling
Shall startle foe at the risk of friend
As yet unready to endure—
And can ye find Goliath's swipe?
The slowly grinding mills are sure;
Let terror alone till the time is ripe.

Be glad when the shout for the spoils, and the glee,
The hoofs and the wheels of the prophets of wrong,
Outthunder the warning of what shall be;
Be still, for the tumult is not for long.
The Finger that wrote from a polished wall
As surely the closed account shall wipe;
The accursed thing ye feared shall fall
To a boy with a sling when the time is ripe.

David Prevailed (*I Sam. 17:50*)

IF THE *dhow* had been seaworthy; if the crew had understood the rigging and the long, unwieldy spar; if we had had any chart or had known anything whatever of the coast; if nobody had been afraid; and, above all, if that incessant din of surf pounding on rocks not far away to starboard had not threatened danger even greater than the Germans in the steam launch, our problem might have been simple enough.

But every one was afraid, including me who held the tiller—and the lives of all the party—in my right hand. Lady Saffren Waldon disguised fear under an acid temper and some villainously bad advice.

"Steer toward them!" she kept shouting in my ear. "Steer toward them! Ram them! Sink them!"

Coutlass, on my other hand, made feverish haste with his love affair, fearful lest discovery by the Germans should postpone forever the assuaging of his hungry heart's desire.

"Steer toward shore!" he urged me. "Who cares if we run on rocks? Can't we swim? Gassharramminy! Take to the land, by —— and give them a run for it!"

He seized the tiller to reenforce the argument and wrenched at it until I hit him and Fred threatened him with the only rifle.

"Get up forward!" Fred ordered, but Georges Coutlass would not go.

"Gassharramminy!" he snarled. "You want my girl. I will fight the whole —— crew before I let her out of the hollow of my arm!"

"All right; touch that tiller again, and I'll kill you," Fred warned him.

"Touch my girl, and you kill me or get out and swim," Coutlass retorted.

Will was up forward with Brown, looking out for breakers through the spray that swept us continually. I watched the glow that rode above the launch's funnel, marveling, when I found time for it, at the mystery of why the cotton sail should hold. The firm, somewhere in Connecticut, who made that export calico should be praised by name, only that the dye they used was much less perfect than the stuff and workmanship; their trademark was all washed out.

Suddenly Will dodged under the bellying sail, throwing up both hands, and he and Brown screamed at me.

"To your left! Go to your left! There are rocks right under us to the right!"

The Germans had passed us, but not by much, for the short, steep seas were tossing their propeller out of water half the time. Because of the course I had taken, the wind was setting slightly from us toward them, and I could have sworn they heard Will's voice. Yet there was nothing for it but to put the helm over, and, as I laid her nearly broadside to the wind, a great

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wave swept us. At that the Greek, the Goanese and all the natives in the hold set up a yell together that ought to have announced our presence to the Seven Sleepers.

I held the helm up and let her reel and wallow in the trough. Now I could see the fangs of rock myself and the white waves raging around them. See? I could have spat on them! There was a current there that set strongly toward the rocks, but a backwash of some sort helped the helm, and we won clear—about a third full of water, with the crew too panicky to bail.

"Hold her so!" yelled Fred in my ear. "Don't ease up yet! If we get too close and they see us, I've got the rifle! They haven't seen us yet!"

"Rocks ahead again!" yelled Will. "Go to the left again!"

We were in the gaping jaws of a sort of pocket, and it was too late to steer clear.

"Throw the anchor over," I roared, "and let go everything!"

Will attended to the anchor. Fred was too anxious for the safety of the only rifle to trust it out of hand, and he hesitated. Georges Coutlass saved the day by letting go the shivering Syrian maid and slashing at the halyard with his knife. Down came the great spar with a crash, and, as the *dhow* swung round in answer to anchor and helm, Fred, Will and Brown contrived between them to save the sail, Brown complaining that we were the first sailors he ever heard of who did not have rum served them for working overtime in dirty weather.

So we lay, then, wallowing in the jaws of a crescent granite reef, and watched the red glow above the German launch move farther and farther away from us. We waited there, wet and hungry, until dawn dimmed the flame from the burning roofs of Muanza, Lady Isobel Saffren Waldon loudly accusing us all at intervals of being rank incompetents unfit to be trusted with the lives of fish, and Coutlass afraid of nothing but interruption. The things he said to the maid, in English—the only language that they had apparently in common—would have scandalized a Genoese harbor "guide" or a Rock Scorpion from the lower streets of Gib.

He did not mention marriage to her, beyond admitting that he had half a dozen wives already and had been too bored by convention ever to submit to the yoke again. The maid seemed enraptured—delirious in the bight of his lawless arm, forgetful of her wetting and only afraid when he left her for a minute.

We dared not try to cook anything, even supposing that had been possible. Forward was a box full of sand to serve as hearthstone, but the little scraps of fuel we had brought with us were drenched and unburnable, even if the risk of being seen were not too great. Lady Saffren Waldon told us we were "toe-rag contrivers." In fact, now that she was out of reach of the men she feared and hated most, she reverted to type and tried to domineer over us all by the simple old recipe—audacious arrogance. Luckily she slept for an hour or two.

A LITTLE before dawn, when it began to be just light enough to let us see the outline of the shore, we sent Kazimoto aloft to reeve our hemp rope through the hold that did duty for block. And, by the time the sun had pushed the uppermost arc of his rim above the skyline, we once more had the sail set.

The wind was still blowing a gale. But daring is forced on the timidest, and there was nothing for it but to study out the method by which that unwieldly spar should be made to pass the mast when tacking, drill Fred, Will, Brown and Kazimoto and then haul up the anchor and sail away before people on shore could see us.

We had to tack back toward Muanza for a quarter of a mile, with fear in our arms to make them clumsy, before I dared believe we were clear of the reefs; but, when I put the helm down at last, there was neither launch in sight nor any other boat that might contain an enemy. The southern spur of Ukerewe stuck out like a wedge into boiling water not many miles ahead, and, once around that, we should be sheltered. The only fly in the ointment then was the probability that the launch would be waiting for us just around the spur or else under the lee of another, smaller island in the offing to our left. But what we could not see in that hour could not upset us much.

Every one clamored for food. The porters, already forgetful of the chain that had galled them and the whips that had flayed them day and night, demanded

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to be set ashore to build a fire and eat. Lady Saffren Waldon awoke to fresh bad temper, and Coutlass, too, grew villainously impatient. His Greek friend, from under the shelter of the leaky reed-and-tarpaulin deck, offered him Greek advice and was cursed for his trouble.

One curse led to another. Then they both had to be beaten into subjection with the first thing handy, because, when they fought, Lady Saffren Waldon egged them on and the maid tried to savage the other Greek with a brooch-pin, which brought out the Goanese to the rescue. That crowded *dhow* was no place for pitched battles, plunging and rolling between the frying-pan of Muanza and the fire of unknown things ahead.

"One more outbreak from you, and I shoot!" Fred announced, patting the rifle.

But he did not mean it, and Coutlass knew he did not. The English temperament does not turn readily on even the most rascally fellow beings in distress. Besides, it was an indubitable fact that we all much preferred Coutlass with his daring record, and now a most outrageous love-affair on hand, to the other Greek or the Goanese. Georges Coutlass was no drawing-room darling or worthy citizen of any land, but he had courage of a kind and a sort of splendid fire that made men forget his turpitude.

We were a seasick, cold and sorry company that rounded the point at last and came to anchor in a calm, shallow bay where fuel grew close down to the water's edge. Having no small boat, we had to wade ashore and carry the women, Coutlass attending to his own inamorata.

We cooked a miserable meal, neither daring to make too great inroad into our stores nor caring to make more smoke than we could help. We hoped to escape being seen even by natives, but Lady Waldon upset that part of our plan by setting up such a scream, when she saw three islanders crossing a ridge three hundred yards away, that they could not help hearing her and came to investigate. She had gone behind a rock to dry her clothes and was forced to dress faster than ever in her life before. She came running to demand that we flog all three "to teach them manners." She had perfectly absorbed the German attitude toward all black men.

From the natives we learned that there was no telegraph wire along that coast and that the only German settlements were semipermanent camps where they were cutting wood for fuel for their own launch and for the steamers the British were building to serve the lake ports, Muanza included.

With that good news for encouragement we made the three natives a small present, in the vain hope that they might be induced not to talk about us, and put to sea again. The weather was fairer and growing intolerably hot. Even before the sun grew high, the *dhow* was a comfortless, indecent thing, more crowded than anything Noah can have had to tolerate; and we lacked Noah's faith in omniscient guidance, in addition to sailing in a hotter latitude and having more fleas on board than the pair he is reported to have carried.

As we crept up-coast, leaning to this or that side when the gusts of wind varied, the only enviable ones were the three in the bow, posted there to keep a lookout for the launch or any other enemy. They had room enough to sit without touching one another and air to breathe that had not been tasted half a dozen times. Fred, Will and Brown took turns commanding that fore-deck lookout, keeping it awake and its units from quarreling.

The rest of us found no joy in life and not too much hope even when Fred's concertina lifted the refrains of missionary hymn-tunes that even the porters knew and most of us sang, the porters humming wordless melancholy through their noses. When that happened, Lady Saffren Waldon's scorn was something the arch-priests of Babylon would have paid to see.

TO BE CONTINUED

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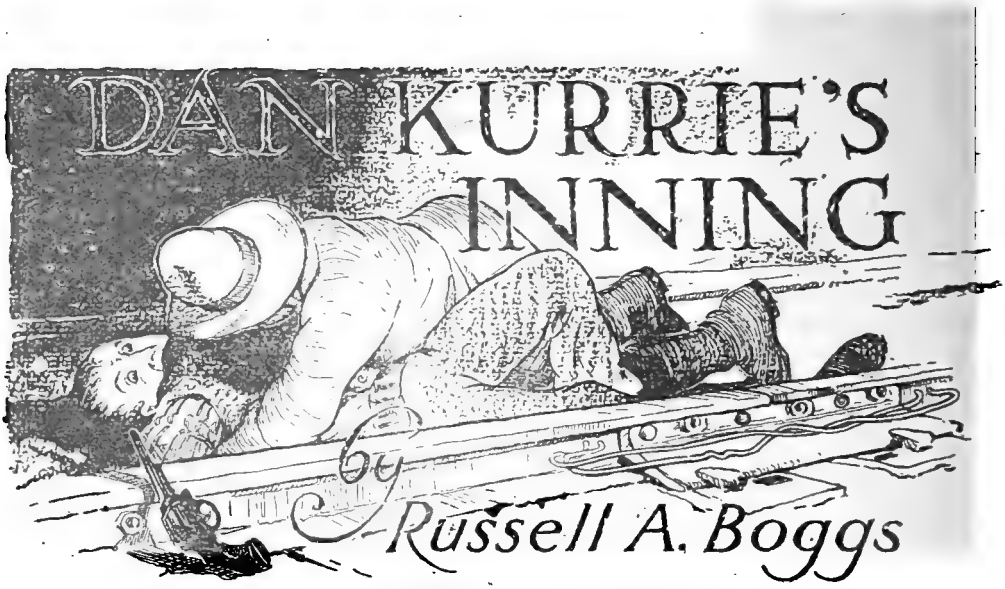

Author of "Leete Protests," "The Hopeless Ham," etc.

DAN KURRIE had money in his pocket—plenty of it; for him. Probably that is why he paused so complacently in the open doorway of Division Superintendent Trapp's office and beamed so benignly at the superintendent's chief clerk.

But yesterday Dan had finished a month's service in the local Ball City office of the commercial telegraph company—on a bonus wire. Telegraph duty in a commercial office Daniel always had considered irksome; he liked to be where he could see the trains pass—or where he could at least hear them. A rumbling, trundling train was like music in his ears; it broke the monotony, wove romance in his brain, made life more worth while; which latter is something, because life at its worst was pretty much worth while to Kurrie.

Anyhow, his month up, Dan had quit the commercial people—with one hundred and ten dollars in his pocket. Since then he'd purchased himself a pair of new shoes, a shave, a hair-trim and had had his suit cleaned and pressed; today, spick and span, exuding a faint aroma of the barber's best face and hair lotions, he stood in the superintendent's doorway with ninety-odd dollars still in his pocket. Ninety-odd dollars, as has been intimated, were a good many for Dan Kurrie; he really didn't care much of a whoop whether he landed a job or not.

"Needing any?" inquired the shining Dan affably of the clerk, the single occupant of the office at the moment.

Chief Clerk Messick, rather lean, rather mean-visaged and rather pompously dignified, looked up with distant eyes. He was somewhat of a flourisher; when he opened a letter—as Dan had noticed him doing—it was an event, the paper snapping in his fingers as he spread it before him. So everything. There assuredly was an air to Mr. Messick—and he didn't seem to give a hang who noticed it. Sometimes one might even have suspected that he was at pains to have it noticed.

"Beg pardon?" said Messick coldly.

Dan was young in years, but he had classified and indexed the chief clerk at the first glance.

"Needing any?" repeated Dan cheerfully.

Messick frowned slightly, reprovingly.

"Operators, I presume you mean?" The chief clerk's voice was near the freezing-point.

"Correct," affirmed Dan.

He stepped through the doorway and into the office.

The clerk hesitated for the barest second while he fixed his reproving gaze on the nonchalant Kurrie.

"No," said Messick then, firmly. "No, not any."

He selected a sheet of paper, thrust it in his typewriter and gave the carriage a vigorous shove. He'd fix this breezy fellow's hopes!

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Kurrie, seemingly not at all depressed by the information, viewed the chief clerk's petulance calmly; also, he'd noticed that slight hesitation before Messick answered him. Dan had had dealings with chief clerks before—pretty often.

"I suppose the superintendent is not around?" now offered Dan.

As he had expected, these words increased the chief clerk's irritation about one hundred per cent. Dan had figured this would wound the clerk's sense of his own importance; would make Messick conclude that he didn't give much weight to his, the clerk's, statements and that he intended to see the superintendent personally about the matter. Dan figured right. The words did wound the chief clerk—also scared him a little, because the superintendent did need operators; needed them badly.

"No," replied Messick shortly. "Not around."

"Will not be today?" pressed Dan.

"No." The chief clerk banged his typewriter snappily.

Kurrie faded through the doorway. He went down the corridor a few steps, came to a door marked Relay Telegraph Office, opened it and went in.

The relay office was filled with the sound of snapping telegraph sounders and typewriter keys. Just inside the railing that separated the place where the operators worked from the front of the office Dan observed an unengaged telegrapher. Him Kurrie approached and gave the telegrapher's high sign. The operator responded.

"I hear the old man's out of town for the day," said Dan.

The operator looked slightly surprized.

"He's out of town, all right enough," said he, "but not for the day."

"That so? His chief clerk was just telling me," remarked Dan.

The operator gave a little snort.

"Messick told you that! The little smudge! Say, that boy needs a lesson! He's told you that out of pure cussedness!"

Kurrie smiled gently.

"Then the old man's coming back today?"

"Sure, he's coming back! He's gone out to Condor. Went out this morning and expects to be back on the noon train. I know, because I sent a message about it this morning, a message that Trapp—the old man—had written himself."

"Well, that's interesting. Guess I'll drop in after lunch and see him then."

"Yes, do that; you'll find him in his office." The affable operator glanced keenly at Kurrie. "Looking for a job, I s'pose?"

"I had been sort of just looking round, not caring much," explained Dan. "But, now that that chief clerk seems to think he's putting one over on me, I believe I do want a job." He grinned. "Just to kind of show him, you understand."

The operator grinned understandingly.

"Then you come back this afternoon," he advised. "The old man's all right; he needs men, and he'll put you on."

II

DIVISION SUPERINTENDENT TRAPP sat at his desk, gently tapping the top of it with his pencil. His brow was wrinkled slightly as he stared vaguely at the back of Chief Clerk Messick's head. At different times as he had sat thus Trapp had wondered why he didn't get rid of the chief clerk. Messick had been inherited from Trapp's predecessor in the superintendent's chair, and his ability was not startling enough to make Trapp particularly anxious to hold on to him together with the other fixtures that had been left behind by the man into whose place Trapp had stepped.

The main thing that bothered the superintendent, though, was a sense of irritation that he always felt when he looked into Messick's mean-visaged face; he always felt himself doubting the man's sincerity—was always conscious of a feeling that behind those oily eyes sly schemes and thoughts were stewing. Still and all, Trapp had kept him. Indisposition to bruise Messick's feelings was the main reason, Trapp usually decided glumly; the superintendent always had considered himself more or less handicapped by his naturally kind heart.

This afternoon, however, Trapp was not thinking particularly of Messick's case; he had something else on his mind.

"Yowell is going to leave, all right," he remarked finally.

Messick, busy at his own desk with some correspondence, turned around in his swivel chair.

"He's got his shack built on that homestead he's taken up," went on Trapp. "Says he's had enough of railroading.

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He's real enthusiastic about going, and I couldn't persuade him to stay. So I guess we may as well give him up; he wants off right away."

The superintendent was silent for several seconds, his fingers busy with their aimless tapping.

"I believe there's something else behind his persistence in wanting off right away, too, and the reason is that man, Garber. Of all the pestiferous busybodies that man is the worst. Just because he owns some odd shares of stock in the Y. & C. R., he seems to think he can order us all around. And the devil of it is that, just because of the interest he does hold in the road, we have to put up with his interference and be polite to him. He's nagged Yowell to the end of his patience, I guess."

At mention of Garber's name, Messick had sort of pricked up his ears. But, when Trapp had finished, all that the clerk said was a deferential—

"Yes, sir."

Trapp aroused himself from his ruminating with a jerk. He straightened in his chair.

"However, we'll have to get a man down there at Condor right soon," he said briskly. "But where have we the man?"

Messick shook his head.

"We don't have him," said the chief clerk.

The door opened as Messick ceased speaking. Dan Kurrie once more stepped into the office.

"Good afternoon," said Daniel.

He smiled brightly at the obviously dismayed chief clerk.

"Good afternoon," responded Superintendent Trapp. Approvingly his eyes took in Kurrie's neat appearance and clean face. "And what can we do for you?"

"You might offer me one job," said Dan readily.

Trapp smiled good-naturedly.

"Operator—experience?"

"Both."

"Handle a mill?"

"Yes, sir."

The superintendent's smile widened. The assurance and easy brevity of the applicant he found not at all offensive.

"Well," said Trapp cordially, "I'm glad to see you. The only thing I'm sorry about is that you want but one job; I could easily give you a half dozen."

"Thanks," said Dan. His glance fell on the silent clerk. "I was in this morning but learned that you were—" he hung tantalizingly over the conclusion of the sentence while he slyly looked at the squirming Messick—"out," he finished.

"I was out at Condor; got back at noon," explained Trapp. He hesitated a second, looking at Dan. "There's a job for you—right away," he said then. "A small agency; mostly cattle business."

"Right away," said Dan. His fingers closed over the roll in his pocket. "But I got a lot of dollars to spend here first."

"They'll keep!" laughed Trapp.

"I expect that's true," acknowledged Dan. Another glance at the fidgeting clerk decided him.

"All right; I'll go," he announced.

Half an hour later all forms had been filled out; Dan Kurrie was ready to depart; his instructions were to report at Condor the next day.

"Good-by," said Dan to Trapp, picking up his hat. "Hope I'll see you again soon." He looked at Messick. "You too," he added.

III

WHEN Pete Becket opened the office door of the Moonbeam, Condor's hotel and bar, a loud voice assailed his ears—a harsh voice, arrogant and deliberately attuned to an insulting pitch. The youthful Peter, but lately arrived in town from the Big J, stopped just inside the door.

Spread across the face of the wooden counter that served as the Moonbeam's desk, his back to it and with an arm stretched out to either side, stood the speaker, Garber, owner of the Circle G, a big bear of a man, heavy-jowled and thin, cruel-lipped.

"This Y. & C. R. is getting to be a devil of a railroad!" Garber was declaring just as Pete stepped in. The Circle G owner added some luridly qualifying phrases. "Why, look at that Big Springs hold-up here last month! Whoever it was that turned that job got away clear and clean—and the Y. & C. R. never even found a sign of their trail! Been running like a headless pullet ever since." Garber snorted his virtuous contempt. "She's getting to be in a bad way, I say!"

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Behind the desk was Bolles, proprietor of the Moonbeam; to one side of the office stood the local liveryman and a local oil-producer; but the person to whom Garber's remarks seemed particularly addressed was standing near the middle of the room, not more than three paces from the Circle G owner. This latter person's back was turned to Pete Becket, but the Big J rider could see that he was a tall young man, dark-haired and well-poised.

"I'll admit it's getting to be in a bad way —in certain respects," returned the man addressed, evenly. "Stockholders, for instance."

Young Pete smothered a gasp of amazement, then leaned forward eagerly for a better view of the man who had just spoken. Surely he recognized that unhurried, even voice with its faintest hint of the Southland drawl.

A sort of gasp, not so well repressed as Pete's, had come from Bolles and the two men at the side of the room; their attitude grew instantly tense, expectant.

Garber's face flew red; his thin lips stretched into a straight, hard line.

"You—you—" he stuttered in a rage; he glared at the man in the middle of the floor. "Don't get too gay, youngster, or I'll eat you up!"

"No," returned the youngster quietly, "you'll not eat me up."

Garber took his hands from the desk and straightened up. He bent forward aggressively.

"Why," he cried contemptuously, "what can you do?"

"I can sing and dance," responded the self-contained young man, "talk some, play a victrola with the right or left hand—oh, several things."

He broke off, waving a deprecating hand. And at the motion all doubt vanished from Pete Becket's face; his expression of puzzled concern changed to one of pleased assurance. After all it seemed but yesterday that Dan Kurrie and he rode the Pecos country range together—and yet in reality here it was two years past.

"Is that all?" sneered Garber. "You ——!" He uttered an unprintable name.

"Not quite," said the man at whom the name was cast.

He moved forward unexpectedly; the fingers of his right hand clasped Garber's big nose and jerked it forward; his left hand shot around in back of Garber; the hand that had pulled the Circle G owner's head forward now shoved in the other direction violently. Garber's head flew down; his heels flew up; with a tremendous bump he landed on the floor, sprawling upon his back. The man who had brought all this about, seemingly in an instant's time, stood looking down at the Circle G man; in his hand was Garber's pistol.

To get a better view of the proceedings, Pete Becket had moved to one side and a little forward. The face of the tall young man with the pistol was perfectly immobile and composed—not a muscle twitched, but his eyes positively flamed with a blasting glare. Only once before had Pete ever seen Dan Kurrie look like that. That was down in the Pecos country when a Mexican had tried some tricks with Dan; and, when the Mexican had left the outfit—after Dan got through with him—it was in trembling and haste, as if the fear of some evil spirit had shriveled up his soul.

"I don't like to be called names," reproved Dan, his eyes fixed on the man at his feet. "Now you can get up and get out. I'll leave your gun here with Bolles; you can get it when you're back in town some time."

The words were ominously quiet. Somehow Pete believed that the Circle G owner would have felt more comfortable if there had been more bluster to them. Anyhow, Garber hesitated but a second; then he reared himself hugely to his feet, his face glowing with mortification and wrath.

"You'll wish—" he began, glowering at Dan.

But Kurrie cut him short.

"The door is right over there," he said pointing.

Garber appeared to ponder an instant. But apparently he decided it was best to go. Endeavoring to assume an air of indifference, of nonchalance, he swaggered over to the office door, jerked it open and went out.

About three different sighs of relief went up as Garber closed the door and disappeared. Proprietor Bolles was the first to speak.

"A narrow squeak, Kurrie," he said in the tone of one who has witnessed the unbelievable. "You worked it that time, but, if I was you, I'd pull my freight right soon. Garber's too powerful a man in

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this country for you to monkey with. Next time he'll get you."

"That's awful true," affirmed the liveryman, fervently.

The oil-man said nothing.

"I appreciate the advice," acknowledged Dan. "But about leaving—well, we'll see." He grinned. "The Y. & C. R. couldn't get along without their agent here."

Pete Becket thought it was about time to make himself known.

"You old son-of-a-gun," he said mildly, "you haven't changed a darned bit!"

Kurrie whirled partly around to perceive this hitherto ignored member of the gathering. His face lit up with the glow of affectionate friendship as he beheld and recognized the member.

"Pete!" he cried, sticking out his hand. "I'll be hanged! What are you doing here?"

"Looking for you," replied the wide-smiling Peter, shaking. Then he added with seeming irrelevance, "How'd you know he owned stock in the Y. & C. R.?"

"He told me so," chuckled Dan; "told me about four times in ten minutes—right after he found out I wouldn't leave my dinner half-finished; wanted me to get right up and go down to the station and order him some stock-cars. If there'd been any good cause for such haste, I'd have gone right off, but I couldn't see what a few minutes more or less would matter."

"Kept picking on you then, did he?"

"Exactly. I guess you saw for yourself how it ended up. I've often got a lot of patience—but I never did see a man so set on having his own way. And all about nothing, practically."

"That's him to a dot; so used to having things move about his own way that, when anything crosses him, he goes pretty near loco. However, when'd you go back to railroadin'?"

"Oh, something like a year ago. I like to see the wheels go round."

Pete laughed.

"You bet you do! Been here at Condor long?"

"One week," said Dan. "The other man quit, and the superintendent sent me down to take his place. How long you been in this country?"

"Pretty near ever since I came North; I'm working for the Big J. Just wait till I tell the boss what I saw you do to Garber. He'll be tickled sick."

Kurrie glanced shrewdly at Pete.

"The boss and Garber don't pull together, then?"

"My, no! Far from it. But I'm reminded—the old man sent me in to see if there's any express at the station for him. A set of rings for his water-pump engine—have they come?

"What's the name, please?"

"Oh, shucks! Of course. Name of Kirkwood—James J. Kirkwood."

"They have," said Dan. "Come on; we'll go down and get 'em."

IV

WHEN Division Superintendent Trapp entered his office on Thursday morning, just ten days after Dan Kurrie's installation at Condor, he found on his desk an open letter. Messick was seated at his own place in the office; evidently it was he who had placed the letter where Trapp would see it at once. The superintendent picked the sheet up, saw that it was headed General Offices and that it was addressed to himself. He read:

> We understand that you have placed a man named Daniel Kurrie in Condor agency. It has come to our notice that this man is an undesirable person to have in the service of the Y. & C. R. Kindly arrange to dismiss him at once, advising this office when done.
>
> C. H. Bigelow,
> General Manager.

"Thunderation!" exclaimed Trapp, staring in some surprize and much annoyance at the paper.

Messick did not look up. He merely bent lower over his work, the better to hide the smug gloating in his eyes.

"I say thunderation!" cried Trapp sharply, perceiving Messick's apparent absorbtion and feeling that he must vent his irritation on some one.

The clerk looked up quickly in some alarm now.

"Garber's work!" snapped Trapp angrily, shaking the letter. "Don't you think so?"

"I wouldn't be surprized," acknowledged Messick.

Trapp slapped his hat on the desk and sat down, the paper still clutched in his fingers.

"Surest thing you know!" he declared. "He's written some of his friends down there at the general offices and had them put this thing through—and incidentally

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taken a slap at me! This letter doesn't say why Kurrie is undesirable, but I'm willing to bet money that Garber has tried to bulldoze him and Kurrie wouldn't stand for it. He didn't strike me as a person who'd take a lot of that sort of thing."

"I expect that's about it," soothed Messick. He bent over his work again.

Trapp glared at his clerk's back. Somehow that always had been the way with Messick—never able to help much with word or deed, always detached, his mind occupied with something other than the business in hand.

"Plague take it, what are you so busy about?" Trapp burst forth irritably.

The clerk once more looked up, more surprized and alarmed than ever.

"I leave tomorrow afternoon—for my vacation," he explained as if reminding Trapp of some forgotten thing. "I'm trying to get things cleaned up. "

"Oh, yes—of course," grunted the superintendent.

He tossed the letter on to the desk, conscious of a strange sense of relief at contemplation of Messick's expected two-weeks absence.

"Well," continued Trapp aloud, "I guess the only thing I can do is to notify Kurrie that he's to be let out. But what'll he think of me?"

He considered this phase of the matter for a little time. Then he nodded his head as if arrived at some decision.

"Yes," he said, "I'll do that; I'll drop off there myself tomorrow and see him. Maybe I can explain a little —make him see it's not my doing."

ON FRIDAY afternoon old Jim Kirkwood and Pete Becket rode into Condor. Without delay they proceeded down the street to the station.

"Is that the young man?" asked old Jim as they neared the tracks of the Y. & C. R.

Pete looked in the direction Kirkwood indicated and beheld Dan Kurrie pulling a baggage-truck around the little depot.

"That's the young man," affirmed Pete. He raised his voice, "Hi there, Dan!"

Kurrie looked around; he dropped the handle of the truck and came to the edge of the platform, smiling.

"This is the boss," explained Pete as he and old Jim dismounted. "Mr. Kurrie, Mr. Kirkwood."

The two shook hands. The grizzled Jim's gray eyes twinkled.

"We've come for a powwow," he said to Dan. "Have you got the time?"

"I've got more time than anything," laughed Dan. "Come on into the office. There's nobody round, and we'll not be bothered. The only thing I've got on my mind is the afternoon westbound, No. 71, and she'll not be in for a little bit."

Dan led the way into the office. They found chairs and sat down.

"Have you seen Garber lately?" inquired Kirkwood casually.

"Not since the day Pete was in," replied Kurrie.

Old Jim chuckled.

"That was a pretty story Pete told me. My, I wish I'd been there, too. I take it you're not thinking of leaving—as Bolles and some of them advised?"

"No; I'm figuring on staying."

"That's right," approved Kirkwood. "Don't you pay any attention to them fellows. All a man needs is an average amount of sand to make Garber back up." The Big J man shifted his chair. "It's Garber we've come to discuss, mostly. I've some things to explain about him—some things that'll maybe help you in your business. If you'd care to hear 'em?"

His quizzical eyes rested on Dan.

"Surely!" declared Dan. "Speak 'em right out; the more the better."

"There'll be plenty," assured old Jim. "Some of it'll be new to Pete, too, but I reckon Pete can stand the shock.

"I expect you've guessed by this time that Garber and me don't hit it off smooth," proceeded old Jim. "His place and mine join. He covets his neighbor's land because I've got more and better water than he has. The trouble started when he tried to show me that I was getting too old for the cattle business; that I ought to sell out at a small figure to him, and such like things—him getting sore when he saw I couldn't be persuaded. Then he wanted me to go into the oil business with him, and, when I wouldn't, he got more riled up than ever; and his disposition didn't improve any when he dropped a big roll in the oil game—which perhaps is only natural. All these preliminary facts are necessary—as you'll see later.

"About six weeks ago I rode up to the north end of my range to sort of look

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things over. Up there we had a wire stretched across the mouth of a steep, dangerous little gully—to keep the cattle from straying in through and maybe falling and breaking their fool necks. Well, sir, that wire might just as well not been there—for all that was left of it. It'd been cut in about a dozen places and pieces of it carried off or throwed away. I looked around some, and, at a bare spot near some bushes and a little ways from the fence, I found some horse hoof-prints—made by a horse with shoes on, the print of one shoe showing it to be rather wide across the toe.

"As you know, almost none of the boys out on the range have their horses shod, though here and there you'll find some of the riding bloods who live in town do. I know that Garber doesn't—usually. So, of course, when I saw the marks of the shoes, I was some surprized—his having been the first name that popped into my head."

Kirkwood paused and looked at Pete Becket.

"You mind about me finding the wire cut, Pete, but I guess I never told you about finding the hoof-prints."

"You didn't," answered Peter.

"Then I guess the rest of this'll be news to you, too. Well, I reflected a little, wondering whoever but Garber would have cut the wire. And then all at once it come over me that maybe them shoes had been worn for just that purpose."

"Just what purpose?" asked Dan, seeing that Kirkwood paused again.

"Just to throw me off—to puzzle me and to make me think that somebody else, somebody other than Garber, had done it," stated old Jim. "Garber thinks he's pretty smooth, and he might have calculated that, if I did discover his trail around there, the shoes would fool me. That's the way my thoughts ran—and a little more hard reflection made me think that maybe I'd come pretty close to hitting it.

"Naturally I was warm about that fence; so that evening I rode over to see Garber with a gun. But Garber wasn't home. So the next evening I rode over again, and again he wasn't home.

"That was the day we'd got word about the Big Springs hold-up—which'd taken place the night before. You'll remember, Kurrie, that Garber mentioned it the day you and him had the fly-around in the Moonbeam. Well, I don't know just what started me to connecting up Garber's absence and the Y. & C. R. robbery, but, anyway, I got to thinking—and I thought a good bit. One of my thoughts was that maybe the man who'd done that piece of work had used shoes on his horse—as a fooler, and another thought was that, if a man had a set of the right kind of shoes and some nails, it wouldn't be much of a trick to tack 'em on a horse or to take 'em off, as needed.

"So the next morning, as the result of all this brain-work, I slipped into the kitchen and swiped one of them cakes of parafine that the cook uses and an empty can. Then I rode up to where I'd seen them hoof-prints near the fence, built me a little fire, melted the parafine in the can and poured it in the plainest one of them wide-corked hoof-marks. It was sort of clay-like ground, and the impression had held its shape pretty well. The parafine cooled off quick, and then I dug the dirt away from around it. When I had finished, I found I'd got a dandy good mold. Then right away I got on my horse and beat it for Big Springs, carrying that hunk of parafine as tender as a dozen eggs so's not to break it.

"Big Springs is about twenty miles east of where I started. It was along sometime in the afternoon when I got there, and for quite a while I circled round and round the place where the train had been stopped. But luck was with me, though, and finally I found what I was looking for—some more hoof-prints; they was back about two hundred yards from the track, near some bushes like the others. They looked awful familiar—one especially. So I laid my mold over it; the thing fitted to a hair!"

Dan and Pete had been all attention.

"The dickens!" said Dan.

"I want to know!" said Pete.

"Yes, sir!" affirmed old Jim firmly. "That's what she did. I'll bet that now you can easy reach the same conclusion I did."

"My brain's so astonished I can't think real straight," said Dan. He considered a second. "But can you be sure that Garber's horse made the marks?"

"OF COURSE I don't much like to go snooping round Garber's barn or corral to see if he's got a set of shoes hid out some place," replied Kirkwood. "But I feel pretty near convinced

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without that. Garber is the only man I know who'd cut my fence; he was away from home the night of the hold-up and the next night; the hoof-marks at the fence and at Big Springs were the same. That makes enough to rouse my suspicions, anyway."

"It does," affirmed Dan. He reflected again. "But I thought Garber was pretty well heeled. Why would he want to do a thing like that?"

"Garber's been pretty near on the rocks lately," advised old Jim. "This is more secrets—but it shows what it means to have a good friend in the bank who'll respond to a little discreet questioning. The oil-game business nearly took Garber under, and he's been borrowing all the money he could get his hands on, trying to keep above water. I figure this Big Springs affair was a desperate effort to keep on top a while longer."

"I see," said Dan. "But what about his Y. & C. R. stock?"

"Exactly," nodded the Big J owner. "That's his alibi—and a mighty slick one. Who'd ever think that a man would rob a train of the railroad that he owned shares in—rob himself, so to speak. But Garber might just as well not own that stock; he's put it all up to borrow what money he could get on it. Which, of course, isn't supposed to be known—but we know it.

"Ownin' the shares gives Garber a chance to talk big, going round grumbling about the way things are being run on the Y. & C. R.—and things like that. Helps to keep suspicion clean away from him. Why, he feels so safe that he even wasn't afraid to mention the hold-up to you the other day and grumble because the road hadn't been able to find anything out about who'd done it."

Dan Kurrie thoughtfully rubbed his chin.

"Your remarks are most certainly interesting and right to the point," he said to Kirkwood slowly. "I expect the best thing to say next is: what's to do?"

Kirkwood nodded agreement.

"The thing to do is get ready," he said. "There'll be another of these stick-ups, you mark my words. It's been pretty reliably reported that the Big Springs one didn't pan out more than thirty thousand dollars. Garber needs more than that; he needs at least again that much to get out of deep water. And, because he thinks he got away with the first one so easy, he'll be fool enough to try a second. You'll see."

"At Big Springs again?" put in Pete.

"No, not likely there again," answered Pete's boss. "That's east of here, and I'm figuring that Garber'll pick the next place somewhere out the opposite direction." Old Jim looked at Dan. "How far's Three Valleys west of this place, Kurrie?"

Dan consulted a sheet tacked up beside the ticket-window.

"Seventeen miles," he announced.

"About what I thought," said Kirkwood. "Well, that's the place I'm placin' my money on! Three Valleys water-tank."

"Why there especially?" asked Dan.

"For four reasons," replied Kirkwood. "First, it's handy home; Garber can get there in a short time and without much trouble. Second, most trains stop there for water. Third, it's a lonely spot. Fourth, the three valleys bear off in a general northwesterly direction. This last is an awful important reason; he can take any one of the valleys, and it'll take him right into big, rough hills where it'd be a job to follow—and, of course, any pursuers would be puzzled as to which valley he'd taken."

"You've got me pretty near persuaded," Dan acknowledged. "Let's lay some good man-catching plans."

"That's the idea," said old Jim.

A long whistle sounded just then, and Kurrie popped out the door.

"No. 71 coming," he called back. "You boys wait in there till I come back."

No. 71 arrived and departed, no passengers getting off and none getting on. The local postmaster came down, claimed his pouch of mail and strolled back up town. Dan pushed his baggage-truck to the rear of the depot and came into the office again, his hand full of train mail. Tossing the bunch of letters on his desk, he noticed that one was marked "Important." Picking it up, he tore the envelope open.

"Just a second," he said to old Jim and Pete. "I'll see what this says."

What it said seemed to be noteworthy. Dan's face betrayed his amazement.

"Just listen to these sweet words!" he exclaimed, and for the benefit of the Big J men he read aloud:

MR. DANIEL KURRIE,
Agent, Condor.
Dear Sir:—

Relief-Agent Morris will arrive on No. 71 tomorrow, Saturday, to take charge of Condor

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agency. After the transfer has been made, your services with this company will no longer be required.

V. P. TRAPP,
Superintendent.

"I'll be danged!" said Pete Becket, and then, as if it were an afterthought, he added several other stronger words.

A little slip of paper had fallen from the envelope to the floor when Dan had pulled out the sheet he now held in his hand. He stooped, picked up the slip, glanced at the words scribbled thereon and then read them also to Kirkwood and Pete:

KURRIE:—
I'm sorry about this. I'll drop off tomorrow with Morris and try to explain.

TRAPP.

"Of course you know the answer," said old Jim, in disgust. "Garber!"

"Most likely," assented Dan.

"Not a doubt of it!" said Kirkwood warmly. "That note shows it's none of Trapp's doings; somebody's made him, that's all."

Kurrie laid the notification and the slip on his desk.

"Well," he said, "we'll not worry about it. Losing the job doesn't bother me any."

"But having Garber put this across on you does, eh?" said old Jim keenly.

A small grin came into Kurrie's face.

"I don't mind saying," he answered, "that it does—some."

"Then I'll tell you what let's do," said Kirkwood. "After you get out of here tomorrow, you come out to the Big J. We'll now have to give up trying to keep an eye on Garber's doings from here, but out at my place we still can watch. I've just been waiting till he makes his next break. When he does make it, we'll try to be there—and then we'll see what's what. If all goes well, the last laugh will be yours, and the last one always is the best—you know that."

"By George!" agreed Dan quickly. "That sounds good!"

"Then that's what we'll do," declared the Big J owner. He rose from his chair. "We'll break off this conflab right now. Pete here'll come back in town tomorrow sometime with an extra horse; you get on it, and he'll show you the way."

"You send Pete in!" said Kurrie.

V

"WHAT I want to know," said Chief Clerk Messick's caller, "is this: has the Y. & C. R. taken their bulls off No. 11?"

It was dark outside—past nine o'clock. In his room Messick had been busy packing a suitcase for his prospective vacation when the caller had arrived.

"Yes, they've been taken off, Garber," answered Messick. He looked across the room at his visitor. "Last week. They've decided the danger is over."

Garber beamed his satisfaction.

"That's good; it's what I've been holding back for. I'll feel safer."

He looked at the open suitcase, half-filled with Messick's apparel.

"Going away?"

"I'm leaving tomorrow for my vacation," said Messick—and had no more than said it when he was sorry that he had been so explicit.

Garber's eyes suddenly glittered.

"So!" said Garber. "Well, isn't that nice! You can just cancel your trip to wherever it was and come with me."

"With you?" ejaculated Messick rather fearfully.

"Sure, with me, You can go right along tomorrow night and help."

"Oh, no!" demurred Messick now plainly in a panic. "I couldn't—I——"

"You can ride, can't you? And you know how to point a gun?"

"Yes," stammered the clerk. "But——"

"No excuses," said Garber remorselessly. "That's all you'll have to do—I'll look after the heavy work. It's safer with two; one man takes a long chance."

"But Trapp will be on No. 11," objected Messick wildly. "He's going to 'Frisco to attend an officials' meeting. He might see me!"

"Bosh!" grunted Garber. "He wouldn't know you if he did see you. You'll have to come, that's all about it. You don't expect me to take all the risks, do you?"

"My percentage is small," said Messick, subsiding into sullenness.

"True. But, if we make a good bag, I'll raise it big."

Messick was silent a moment. His eyes revealed that the bait was tempting.

"I've looked after you pretty good in this railroad business," pressed Garber.

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"Pushed you right along. It's your turn now."

"How much?" demanded Messick, thinking of the percentage.

"Half of all over thirty thousand," said Garber promptly.

Messick swallowed hard.

"I understand No. 11 hauls a worth while load on Saturday nights," he observed, palpably wavering.

"That's the stuff—that's what we want!" Garber leaned forward, smiling enthusiastically. "Come on—be a game guy! We'll make a clean-up!"

Messick hesitated, but the bait looked too savory. He took hold.

"I'll come!" he promised.

VI

ON SATURDAY afternoon Superintendent Trapp and Relief-Agent Morris arrived at Condor on No. 71 as scheduled. After Morris had been introduced, Trapp beckoned Dan Kurrie over to the edge of the platform, out of earshot of the relief-agent.

"Now see here, Kurrie," began Trapp at once. "I don't want you to think this is my doing—discharging you so shortly. I can't say much about it because the orders came from higher up; even that's more than I ought to hint. But I can and will say that I hate it like the devil."

"That's all right, Mr. Trapp," reassured Dan, smiling a little. "I understand, perfectly. You're not responsible for Garber's actions—or his influence."

Trapp appeared a little surprized.

"So you know it was Garber. Well—all right; I'm glad of it."

"It wasn't hard to figure; he and I had a little disagreement one day." Dan looked squarely into the superintendent's eyes. "But, if Garber thinks the game is over so far as I'm concerned, why, he's badly mistaken."

"How's that?" asked Trapp quickly.

Dan smiled again.

"I'm not quite ready to say just yet. But, when my inning comes, you'll hear about it."

The superintendent's eyes sparkled. He placed his hand on Dan's shoulder.

"Good boy! Go get 'em! I can't imagine what you've got up your sleeve—but I hope it's plenty."

"Thanks!" said Dan.

"If you can put something over on Garber, you'll be helping me, too," said Trapp.

He stopped and listened as an eastbound freight whistled far down the tracks.

"Now go ahead and get the transfer to Morris made," he finished. "I've got to climb on this eastbound extra and get back to Ball City. Got to get a few things at the office cleaned away before I catch No. 11 west tonight. I'll expect to hear of you before long, then?"

"I can't promise about the time," laughed Dan, "but I feel safe to promise that you'll hear!"

It was dusk Saturday evening when Dan Kurrie and Pete Becket rode out from Condor. By the time the transfer at the station had been completed, the supper hour was at hand. So Dan and Pete had eaten and for an hour thereafter had leisurely waited about town before starting for the Big J. Proprietor Bolles, of the Moonbeam, had been sorrowful when Dan came to settle his bill.

"I warned you," reminded Bolles moodily.

"You did," confessed Dan.

"A man oughtn't to fool with Garber," said Bolles.

"You're right," said Dan; then he added soberly, "I'll not, after this."

From Condor the Big J man and Dan traveled due north. An hour after starting, night had come completely and they rode beneath the stars, over swelling slopes and sharp ridges. The journey had been pleasant with the exchange of mutual experiences, the keen air fanning their faces as they jogged along. Close at hand objects were vaguely distinguishable in the starlight; at any distance they were quite invisible.

"Here," said Pete, drawing rein after a time, "is where we can cut across Garber's place and save a couple miles if we want. We don't go this way often in the daytime, account of Garber's uncertain disposition. But it'll not matter now, I reckon."

"We'll cut then," said Dan. "It'll sort of tickle me to ride over Garber's ground, even if it is after dark."

They swung off to the left, and presently they could perceive a light twinkling over to the east of them.

"That's where he lives," said Pete, and Kurrie knew he referred to the Circle G owner.

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A few minutes later a dark shape loomed up before them.

"An old hay-shed of Garber's," explained Pete, and they were riding by it when Dan suddenly pulled up.

"Thought I heard something," he said.

They waited silently, listening. Then a sound came to them, a sound like that made by a horse's iron shoe when it strikes and stumbles over a stone; a moment later the beat of hoofs was plainly audible.

"You always had good ears," said Pete. "Let's get back of this shed."

They rode cautiously around a corner of the building and waited, stretching out in their saddles in an endeavor to see in the direction whence the sounds came. Then, not twenty paces distant, they beheld two vague horsemen cross the trail they had been following and proceed west. One of the horses stumbled again, and to the silent two by the shed came Garber's unmistakable harsh voice grumbling at his mount.

"Get along and lift your feet! You can't stop at the first mile, you fool—you've got twenty more of 'em to do!"

"Careful," cautioned an unfamiliar voice.

Garber's subdued but reckless laugh floated back.

"Oh, fiddlesticks! Who'd hear?"

The horsemen faded into the darkness beyond. The two at the shed waited until all sound of their passing had ceased. Pete felt Dan's hand on his arm.

"Twenty miles, he said! That must mean Three Valleys!" Dan's voice was low and eager.

"Man, yes!" exclaimed Pete gently. "Twenty miles from here would just about make it."

"And there's only one train they could be after—No. 11. She's the only one that comes along tonight."

Dan did some figuring.

"Let's see. It's about 9:30 now. No. 11 is due at Condor at 12:35. She ought to make the seventeen miles from there to Three Valleys in twenty-five minutes. That'd make her due at Three Valleys about 1 A.M."

"That's it!" said Pete, shaking his reins. "No. 11 is what they're after! Come on; we'll beat it round 'em and get there, too!"

"Yes, but wait!" interjected Dan. "How about Kirkwood? He'll not want to miss this!"

The impatient Pete held in his horse.

"Moses—you're right! Old Jim would be sore as a three-day boil if we'd leave him out. And guns—we've got to get them! I've mine, but how are you fixed?"

"Not a one," stated Dan.

"Then let's go. We'll get the old man and pick up something to shoot with—if we need to."

"But can we make it to Kirkwood's place and then get to Three Valleys in time?" questioned Dan.

"We can," proclaimed Pete, "if we ride like ——!"

"Then that's the way we'll ride," said Dan. "Lead on."

VII

DOWN through the night No. 11's bright headlight eye came peering as she rolled slowly to a stop at Three Valleys water-tank. The fireman had scuttled to the top of his coal heap, and, as the engine came to a pause, he started to pull the waterspout down. Right then things began to happen.

From the darkness of the water-tank tower a vaguely discernible figure stole out. The faint radiance from the engine lights and from the coaches behind disclosed that the figure was masked, and something glinting in his hand hinted at a pistol.

"Put up your hands!" a deep voice growled at the engineer and his fireman.

The astonished fireman's feet must have slipped, for he promptly went sliding and tumbling down over the coal toward the furnace door. Arrived in the cab, he either through fright or design continued to go farther, his further progress being down the cab steps on the side away from the water-tank. He had reached the middle one of these steps when a voice from that side of the engine addressed him.

"Get up in that cab!" ordered this second man sharply. "And put your hands up! Keep 'em up, too!"

This second man seemingly was no person to argue with; he sent a shot crashing into the cab roof to show that he wanted his orders obeyed. The fireman did as instructed.

But now, to the fireman who on his side gazed steadily in the direction of the man below him, and to the engineer who on his side likewise gazed toward the man below

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him, a second surprizing action came forward. From the darkness behind each of the hold-up men a seeming shadow slipped out from the darker shadows. The speechless fireman beheld the shadow on his side raise an arm. There was a heavy thump, and the hold-up man there dropped limply to the ground.

But on the engineer's side the thing did not come off so well. Just as the shadow there neared his victim, the hold-up man happened to turn partly around. There came a flash, a shout, and the two figures grappled.

"Yow-ee-ee!" rose Pete Becket's voice on the fireman's side. "Got him, Dan?"

No answer came to Pete's query. So he ran around the engine and joined a third shadow, who by now had come out from the darkness behind the water-tank.

"Hold him, Kurrie!" It was old Jim Kirkwood's voice that came from this third figure.

"Give it to 'm, Dan!" cried Pete as he beheld the struggle along the tracks. "Give 'm the old Pecos hook!"

"Sure!" grunted Dan Kurrie's voice.

And apparently the advice had been good, for there came a sudden resounding plunk—and one of the combatants fell to the ground. The other promptly dropped on top.

"If you've got that flashlight, Pete," said Dan, panting, "you might turn it on here and see what we've got."

"Here she is," said Pete at once and whipped a beam of light on Dan and the man he sat on.

Meantime trainmen's lanterns back along the coaches had been popping in and out of the car doors in an uncertain, bewildered sort of way—as if alarmed by the shots and then puzzled by the continued shouting that followed.

"What's the matter up there?" at last called a voice that by its authoritative tone evidently was the conductor's; this was just as Pete turned on his light. "What's wrong?"

"Nothing, now!" answered old Jim Kirkwood. "Come on up and have a look!"

But apparently the conductor was still backward, suspecting a trap.

"Everything all right, Poole?"

This question seemed to be addressed to the engineer, for it was he who answered. A quickly comprehending man, the engineer; he had grasped at once that the attempted hold-up had been frustrated by unknown rescuers.

"All right, Keenan. Come right along."

The engineer's words obviously were satisfactory. The lanterns came bobbing forward.

"For the love of Henry!" exclaimed the conductor, the first to arrive. "What's this?"

He gaped at Dan Kurrie and the man beneath him.

A brakeman and a porter were next, and after them came another man—a man without a lantern.

"You, Kurrie!" cried this last man in astonishment, crowding forward into the circle of light made by Pete's flash-lamp and the gleaming lanterns.

"Yes, sir," said Dan, looking up into Superintendent Trapp's face and smiling broadly. He reached down and tore away the mask that still covered his victim's face. "And here's another you ought to know."

"Garber!" ejaculated Trapp incredulously.

Kurrie rose to his feet, and, as he did so, the superintendent bent over and looked down into the fallen man's face. Garber's eyes had already come open; now he seemed to grasp the situation more fully; raising himself on his elbow, he sat up.

"Ask him about the Big Springs job, too," suggested Dan to Trapp.

Garber's lips twisted.

"Go to ——!" he snarled.

Pete Becket, shifting around, had felt something under his foot. He stooped and picked the object up; it was Garber's pistol, dropped at the first grapple. Pete remembered something.

"Here," he said to the brakeman, "come on round to the other side with me. I've got one over there, too. We'll go fetch him." The two disappeared around the engine.

Superintendent Trapp had straightened up. He faced Kurrie.

"Glory be!" he said. "And he was trying another tonight!"

"That seemed to be his intention," said Dan.

"And you stopped him?"

"Not alone," replied Dan quickly. He pointed to Old Jim. "My friends Kirkwood here and Pete Becket——"

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He broke off, looking around for Pete.

Just then the Big J man and the brakeman came back from the other side of the engine. Between them they conducted a maskless, wabbly prisoner.

"Look at this'n," said Pete, eager to show the result of his cunning.

Trapp was not the only one to be amazed at sight of this second prisoner's face. Dan Kurrie stared in as much astonishment as the superintendent.

"Am I seeing straight?" exclaimed Trapp with a sort of gasp. "Kurrie, is that Messick, or isn't it?"

"Messick it is," affirmed the astonished Dan.

"The sneaking rascal!" said Trapp.

Dan peered forward into the chief clerk's shamed, sullen face.

"I'd expected to see you again sometime, Messick," said he, "but not like this! You certainly surprize me!"

Messick's lips twitched, but he said nothing. For a moment the superintendent also was silent while he passed his hand over his brow in an uncertain sort of way. Then he appeared to gather himself together.

"Put these two in the baggage-car under guard," he said to the trainmen about him; he pointed to Garber and Messick. "We'll take them along." He looked up at the engineer, who through it all had not stirred from the cab. "Call the flag," he ordered. "We must get moving."

The trainmen below started back toward the baggage-car with the two prisoners as the whistle roared out its call. Superintendent Trapp turned to where Dan and the Big J men stood, Pete's light shining in his face. A sudden cheerfulness filled the superintendent; this night's business would rid him of the pestering Garber and of his irritating chief clerk.

"Your inning's been a corker, Kurrie!" he cried. "A base-hit jubilee!" His eyes twinkled in the glow of Pete's lamp. "The men who tried to put you out of the game will now be yelling to keep you in. The men higher up, I mean—and you bet I'll tell it to them!"

Trapp glanced back toward the rear of the train and saw the flagman's lanterns drawing close.

"I'm obliged to you and your friends."

"Don't mention it," returned Dan. "The fun was all ours!"

"We'll talk all that over at a bette time; I'll have to be going now."

The superintendent started to move away but had not gone three steps when he faced abruptly.

"Have you still got all those dollars," he asked whimsically, "the ones you mentioned the day you asked for a job?"

"Most of 'em," said Kurrie.

"Well, if you still are aching to spend them, come in to Ball City next week and see me."

"I'm liable to do that," warned the grinning Dan.

"Do!" said Trapp. "Come without fail—because, when they're all gone, I know a place where you can get some more!"

The superintendent turned and hurried as No. 11 started to roll ahead; he was thinking about the place at the chief clerk's desk that would be vacant.

SERGEANT MADDEN'S THIRST

by E. A. BRININSTOOL

AMONG the wounded with Reno's command at the Battle of the Little Big Horn, June 25, 1876, was Saddler Mike Madden, who was promoted to be sergeant on the field for distinguished gallantry in action.

He had been shot through the leg, and amputation was necessary.

Madden was exceedingly fond of his grog, which had been denied him on the long march, and he had accumulated a tremendous thirst. When it came to the operation, he stubbornly refused to take an anesthetic, but calmly watched the surgeons perform the amputation, after which it was ordered that he be given a good stiff horn of brandy to stimulate him.

Madden eagerly gulped down the liquor, and his eyes fairly danced as he smacked his lips and exclaimed:

"M-m-m-eh! Foine, Docther, foine! Cut off me other leg!"

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AN ECHO

by S. B. H. Hurst

Author of "Flotsam," "On the Far Edge," etc.

ALL about us was the silence of the arctic night, our fire throwing a warm circle over the snow. A fickle aurora flirted with the stars. The dogs, buried to their noses, ran with their hunting ancestors in their dreams. Tired to the point where only fondness for our pipes could keep us awake, Dick Mansell and I drowsed, reveling in the lethargy of healthy appetites fully satisfied.

The real began to mingle with the unreal; faces looked waveringly through the mists of the past; forgotten voices whispered strange words. My pipe dropped from between my teeth. For several years I watched myself recovering it. There was a blank. Then Mansell was prodding me. I heard him quieting Walter, our lead-dog, a mixture of many breeds.

"Somebody coming along the trail, Barney."

"Oh, go to sleep!"

"I'm not fooling. Shut up, Walter."

For what seemed hours I struggled to wakefulness, through a dream wherein I prevented our dogs from starting their inevitable fight with the dogs of the stranger.

"He's alone. No sled. No dogs." Dick was prodding me again.

His words were as comforting as a reprieve to a condemned criminal. I could go to sleep again. If the often inquisitive Walter became interested in the stranger, let him take care of himself! The significance of "No sled. No dogs" had not reached me.

"He's sort of running—coming fast." Dick was slipping into his moccasins. "Talking to himself, too. Something wrong!"

Like a bursting shell, Dick's last words exploded the haze of my sleepiness. A man traveling alone, talking to himself, without an outfit, as far from other humans as we were, did mean something wrong. That "talking to himself" hinted at all the tragedies the world of white silence could give birth to! I began to struggle out of my comfort.

"Starved. Gone bugs on the trail?" I suggested, watching the swaying, chattering figure drawing rapidly nearer, taking on the outlines of a white man.

"Something like that," my partner assented. "If he is crazy, we must humor him, poor devil. Remember Harper?"

I did, and the memory was unpleasant. Harper had tumbled into our camp much as this stranger was stumbling: stark crazy, all in and with a weird tale about another man. We had made Harper comfortable, but his tale had seemed so absurd that we ignored it—ignored the entreaties Harper had flung at us in what we did not recognize as lucid moments. Not from selfishness—in justice to ourselves I must say that—but because we could not credit the possibility of the situation he was trying to explain.

And, because we did not heed him, we sometimes believed a man had died—in misery and alone. It might have been out of our power to have helped, but we would have felt better had we made the attempt. So we had promised each other never to

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allow another apparently crazy statement to go uninvestigated, whatever the trouble to ourselves. Hence Dick's remark.

But I sighed dismally. It was way past midnight, and I was very tired. I hoped the man was just lost and that all we would have to do would be to feed him.

I quieted the dogs when he reeled up to the fire. There was a small pack on his back, probably food; but there was that about him—even in the way he brushed the frozen breath from the furs about his face—which in any community would have caused men to tap their foreheads significantly: that nervous lack of normality, or whatever it is, which one associates with the mentally deficient. And, speaking in a cultured, stilted, "English" voice, his first words confirmed such an opinion.

"Is either of you a clergyman? I am trying to find a clergyman—Church of England, if possible."

Imagine it! We were far North in Alaska, in the depth of Winter in 1885, three weeks of the hardest sort of travel from a settlement. It was about two in the morning, and he had found our camp by the luckiest sort of accident—found us, when there probably wasn't another human being within a couple of hundred miles. He was all alone, without an outfit, even without sleeping-gear; and—from the look of him—but for finding us, he would have gone on stumbling and talking to himself, for perhaps a few hours longer—then he would have fallen for the last time.

Yet, the first thing he did was to ask for a minister—"Church of England, if possible"! Can you imagine it? The pathos of his preciseness, of his stickling for creed! Asking for about the last thing he might be expected to find, and then being particular. Mad, there could be no doubt of it—even if he hadn't talked to himself as he came along; and it looked like our duty to force him to lie down, to make him comfortable, find out if he needed food, make him sleep.

But we wondered. For in that asking for a minister we saw a meaning—something that would make him fight before he would sleep; something likely to drag us away from our comfortable fire out to the bleak waste; some errand of mercy his deluded mind had invented, yet one which neither of us would think of shirking because of that lamentable and never to be forgotten experience with Harper. Why, when we first thought him crazy, the Harper memory had jumped up to bother us, and now it was running true to form! I swore under my breath, but my partner did not hesitate.

"It's a curious coincidence," Dick drawled, "but I happen to be an ordained Church of England clergyman—Oxford."

Dick's notion about humoring a lunatic appeared to be rather large. I wondered how far he would go if he were pushed.

"Then you will come with me, won't you?" the man stammered anxiously, shivering, but with never a word that indicated his gratitude or his surprize.

"Certainly. But you're tired out. Lie down and rest a while before we start."

"No, no," the poor devil's voice rose to a scream; "we can not wait. Unless we hurry, we will be too late. We must start now, please."

"If it's that important, I suppose we must," my partner replied. "Oh, by the way, what do you want me to do?"

The man did not answer, staring at the snow as if trying to decide whether or no he should answer Dick's question. My partner repeated it.

"I—I'd rather not tell you—yet. Won't you just take my word and come? You are needed very badly."

It looked like a large order, this asking us to break camp and then refusing to tell what he wanted. But, somehow, my belief in his madness passed from me. Yet, I argued, he couldn't be anything else but mad. What was his hurry? If he had asked for a doctor, it would have been different—a friend hurt, lying in need of medical assistance out on the snow. But a minister! And his traveling without an outfit would have been understandable if he were looking for a physician—with his sleeping-gear left to keep the other man comfortable.

All his apparent craziness could in that case have been put down to anxiety, when a man's brain slips. But a minister. And what did he want? How far would Dick humor him? I looked at my partner in the firelight. He seemed to make up his mind with a snap.

"Very well," he spoke shortly; "we'll break camp and start right away. Is it far?"

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BUT the fellow missed the question cunningly.

"I will help you," he suggested.

"So," Dick stiffened, "you should."

He hesitated, and I could see that only his innate dislike of hurting any one prevented a reference to the other's sanity. Not that I would have blamed Dick if he had jumped the fellow. He had come to us, apparently acting crazy to get our sympathy. Then, his extraordinary need satisfied, he had shown no gratitude when Dick agreed to go with him, and had capped his churlishness by not answering a question any man would have asked. But, if my friend meant to play minister to the limit of gentleness, I had put upon myself no such inhibition.

"See here," I approached the stranger with all the truculence my loss of sleep had bred in me, "you may take advantage of the parson, but I'm different. You come here, ask for the utterly unexpected and by the greatest good fortune get it. Then you refuse to answer a decent question. Well, this is my outfit, and we don't start until you tell us a good deal more about where we are going and what you want. Get me?"

The man wilted so quickly and completely that I felt as if I were being cruel to a child. Like a flash, I saw myself as a brute—remembering how he had come to us, alone and without outfit, which implied a great need of haste and help—and realized that his sudden change from apparent insanity to reticence had been due to his relief at finding us, at finding a minister. Then I saw where Dick, by being gentle and humoring the man, had seen further than I had seen.

"I was so afraid," he was nearly crying, "that you might not come. I hardly know what to do. It's not for myself, yet, somehow, I can not tell you. We should be there by daylight."

"Oh, what's the use—you know you'll go, Barney. We're wasting time. Let's start."

I tried to dissemble a feeling of shame by whispering to Dick as we harnessed the tired dogs—

"Is he crazy, do you think?"

"Sometimes I think he is; sometimes not. But what does it matter—we've got to help him," my partner mumbled, a strap between his teeth.

"But you're not a minister," I persisted, still angry with myself. "And what does he want, anyhow?"

"If he had a hurt partner, he'd want a doctor." Dick bent over Walter, who showed disgust in every muscular line of him—and who could blame the dog? "But I figure his partner's dead. I've seen a case like it before—heard of others, too—partner dying asks for burial service. This chap is educated but has forgotten service and has no book. Feels rotten about it. The thing gets on his mind until he thinks he has to hurry—he's crazy one minute, sane the next. About all in with the strain. And maybe he didn't wait to bury the other chap, because he didn't know the prayer—so he's scared a wolf may get him. And I don't have to be a parson to read the burial service, you know."

The argument looked good, and I knew that Mansell always carried with him a tiny prayer-book of the Church of England, given to him by his mother back in England when he was quite a kid. Yes, the more I thought about it, the more likely it looked. I thought of the friendship between Dick and myself. Imagined him dying and saw how terrible it would be—miles away from other men, all alone on the trail. What a beast I had been—snarling at the poor devil just because he was afraid we might not go with him if he told us he only wanted us to bury a dead man.

How it must have got on his mind. The long hours, while his best friend lay suffering with nothing he could do to ease the pain or help. Then the sudden loneliness, realizing your best friend was dead after all the years together. How in that loneliness your partner's last request—read a prayer over me—must grow in importance until it becomes a pressing need, something to be done at once. Then you find you have forgotten the prayer, and you feel that the dead man is watching you reproachfully.

To find a minister becomes a test of your regard for him, a matter above honor, something for which everything else must be set aside. No wonder the poor chap had acted queerly. What a dirty brute I had been—I would be hitting a woman next, if I went on. No doubt about Dick's idea being the correct one. A possible other contingency was too unlikely, too

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much a flight of nervous fancy—I mean the suggestion that there was a trap; that the fellow was trying to lure us where we would be robbed. And what robber would have thought of asking for a minister?

A doctor, now, would have been a good bait. I began to work faster. Then another notion sent me to Dick's side. I whispered again—

"We may have it wrong—the other man may not be dead—may be dying and wants the prayers read over him before he passes out."

"I thought of that—" my partner buckled the last of the harness—"but 'Church of England' made me think I was wrong. If he'd asked for a priest, it would have been more likely. No; the other man's dead, all right—which is one reason I don't feel like bothering him with questions."

He swung the long whip—I felt that loss of sleep made my brain act woozily—and we went ahead, following the trail made by our visitor, with him running along with us in spite of his fatigue and against Mansell's suggestion that he ride. It looked as if he were too nervous to sit still—finding relief running with us, as most men do when worried. And, as we went along, it became more and more patent that he was worried almost to death. I came to the conclusion that he thought as much of his friend as I did of Dick. Later on I found I was right!

Because there are those who do not understand the effect of that barren loneliness of white, I have alluded to the Harper matter, lest this true tale may seem strange to them. Because men who live their lives in cities may say we left our fire without much persuasion. But the men of the wide places—those spaces which draw the selfishness out of a man as a poultice sucks at a fester—will understand, whether they be wanderers or sailors.

But our dogs were tired and would have quit had we not more than coaxed them along. And the hours went in the mechanical way they go in such cases, and now and then my eyes closed at the pole, and I would sleep for yards, waking with a stumble.

I was again reminded of the terrible strain under which our visitor had come to us when the shortness of the distance he had traveled came to me. It had never grown quite dark, what of the snow and the stars, but about nine in the morning, with the short day about to come to us, we topped a rise and saw the shack—a bit of a cabin. Then I felt quite sure that we had not been called to a funeral, and with that understanding the thing grew into a mystery.

AS FAR as that goes—as far as Dick and I expect to know—it will always remain a mystery. I mean all that led up to the event of that dark, cold early morning. I look back at it as one looks at a picture in a frame—a bit of life cut off from all the rest and flung at us to wonder about. For, as you will see, the stranger never even told us his name.

Looking at the cabin, I could see no smoke rising. But the stove was not cold, because I saw to it as soon as we got inside. I stopped the dogs and looked a question at my partner about unharnessing, but the stranger, sensing, would have none of it.

"Hurry. Hurry, please," he repeated several times. "Just let the team stop. They won't run away, will they? Oh, come inside, quickly."

He stood facing us imploringly, his back to the closed door, the snow piled high against the side of the cabin. For a moment a trick of memory likened him to an itinerant showman trying to tempt curious yokels to his cheap exhibition—miserably needing the few pence they would pay him and in deadly fear they would pass him by without entering his tent. And I think that in both Dick and myself curiosity was the dominating emotion at the moment—for we had dragged ourselves from comfort to a preconception, and, in the baffling confusion that crowded with the realization of our error, our eagerness to know why the stranger wanted us, needed a minister, strangled every suggestion of a guess.

But Dick hated curiosity—to him it always smelled of inquisitiveness—and, curbing the impulse to find out what was in the cabin, he began to feed dried salmon to the dogs, with me watching him impatiently and the stranger begging him to make haste—until I turned on him, as I had done at our camp, telling him that the health of our dogs meant life to us; that they had earned their food, anyhow, and that he ought to think himself —— lucky and quit his nagging. For his selfishness was annoying me.

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Then Dick took a final look at our outfit and nodded. The stranger opened the door, and we followed him into the cabin.

The lamp was lit, turned low, so that the place was in near darkness, and we felt that the interior was what one would expect to find. Until the man turned up the lamp hurriedly—looking away from it, apparently anxious to speak to somebody but afraid to. Then it became altogether different—even the things that had to be had a subtle difference about them: the furniture, the way it was arranged, about dozens of little things. And in one corner lay the cause of this difference—in a bed, for there was no bunk—a woman, with eyes that had opened weakly to our coming.

It was fear of never seeing those eyes open again that had kept the man silent when he turned up the lamp—fear of finding them closed forever. One look at her face, and Dick and I knew—knew the reason of the poor devil's haste—and mentally cursed ourselves for every delay. And my thick skull had kept out the truth—that the man wasn't thinking about himself at all; that all his anxiety was for her sake.

Mansell and I stood to one side. Silently we removed our caps and outer clothes, looking at one another. And then it came to me that the weight of the whole affair was on my partner. The man was kneeling by the bed, his arms about the woman. Neither of them had said a word. And Dick had to face the horrible fact of pretending to be a minister to a dying woman. Neither of us had expected such a travesty on truth. To ease the mind of a near-insane man by reading the burial service over his dead friend—Dick had felt justified in saying he was a clergyman to do that; the lie seemed such a tiny thing.

But now, to read the prayers for the dying, to administer the sacrament to a trusting woman with but a few minutes to live—this, to a man of Dick's stern religious views, was worse than murder, I was sure, because he would feel as if he were murdering her soul. Well I knew how he looked upon such things—how utterly sacred to him was the bread and the wine of that sacrament in the hands of one ordained. But for a pretender it meant nothing but sacrilege in its worst form.

At that moment I felt it all myself, comfortably free from the burden of religious belief though I was. So I could see only one way out of it—cruel as it would be to the dying woman—Dick would have to admit the lie, explain it as best he could and go. Then the woman spoke, as if each word required her last vestige of strength:

"Did you find one? Has he come?"

The agony of disappointment was actually upon her. The man—not overly quick-witted—did not reply immediately. Dick moved irritably, as he always did when slow-mindedness caused suffering. But he himself stood upon the abyss. I could gage his thoughts. Sympathy and religious belief fought for supremacy in his mind. Somehow, it came to me that he was praying silently. Then with a virile suddenness—as if, for the woman's sake, he were casting his own soul upon the pyre of eternal flame—he walked to the side of the bed.

"Yes, madam, I am a clergyman—of the Church of England."

"Oh, thank God, thank God," and she sobbed like a very tired child.

Dick stood by the bed, looking down at her. She lay partly on the pillows and partly on her man's arm. She seemed to think for a minute; then she whispered what sounded like—

"Lift me, dear."

The man raised her and propped her up clumsily with more pillows. How clean and white those pillows looked! Then she smiled feebly up at Dick—standing well over six feet, very broad, the handsomest man I ever knew—her face like worn ivory. She lifted a pathetically fragile hand, and he took it gently.

"I knew you would come," she murmured with the happy conviction of faith vindicated. "I prayed to God to send you—to send me a clergyman of my own church, although Jim said there wasn't a chance of finding one—and I knew He would hear me. God never forgets any of us, does He?"

"Never," replied Dick firmly.

"And now I'm so happy," she relaxed with a little sigh.

It was patent that she had only a few minutes to live. I felt that it would be better for both herself and Dick if she would die at once. Why should her dying cast a shadow over the life of the finest man I knew? If she died before he had time to

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read the prayers or administer the sacrament, she would be no worse off. So I reasoned. An unbeliever has much the best of it in such situations!

There wasn't a sound in the cabin but the murmur of the drawing stove. The woman was apparently asleep. I almost swore when the man roused her.

"We are keeping the gentlemen waiting, dear," he told her.

"Oh, yes," she seemed to come back to things with an effort. "Oh, yes; how selfish of me. But—" she looked at me—"are there enough?"

"I don't think that will matter in a case like this, will it?" the man faltered, addressing Dick.

"I don't understand you," replied my partner.

What new devilment was this? I grew angry again. Was there some fancy ceremony, some fandango of praying, they wanted? Wouldn't simple prayers do for them? I made up my mind to study the prayer-book when I got a chance. I don't enjoy watching a game I don't know how to play!

The man and woman looked at one another—both terribly embarrassed.

"You tell him, dear," the man said.

"Of course I will." The woman, as a woman will, dying though she was, took charge. "How silly of us not to have told you at first. You see—we—we—we want you to—to—to marry us!"

SO THAT was it. I might have known. That explained everything. And it changed everything. Now Dick could tell them he wasn't a preacher and let them do the worrying. It wasn't the woman's fault that she was dying; so Dick had sympathized with her, and lied so he could give her peace during her last moments. But this was altogether different. It was her fault that she was not married.

You must remember that this was in 1885, and the lonely cabin proved they had lived together a long time. They must have lived together in civilization, too. There were far too few people in Alaska at that time for two of their kind to have met there. And, if they had been content to live together until approaching death frightened them—well, they had only themselves to blame! Then I looked at Dick. He didn't meet my eye, but, of course, he felt as I did. He would tell them the truth. What was he waiting for?

The woman saw in the marriage service her only hope of heaven, and Dick believed she was right. But he also believed that, if he performed the ceremony, they would be no more married than before. It would ease her mind. Then she would die and find herself deceived. Three people in that cabin believed that for an unmarried couple to live together was a deadly sin; that to die unmarried meant an eternity of suffering; that, if they were married before death separated them, they would meet again in heaven.

Now all Dick could do was to make the woman happy for a few short breaths—he could do this by committing what he believed to be a damnable sin at the price of his own soul. And the thing would haunt him for the rest of his life. I knew him. Well, I wasn't going to let him do it. The woman wouldn't be any better off, anyhow—even according to their beliefs. According to mine, it didn't matter, anyway. If two people give each other their words and keep them—that's enough. But it was up to me!

Dick and I had been together so long that words were very often unnecessary. I had filled my lungs to give vent to my little speech, when my partner glided to my side like a panther. His hand was laid roughly on my mouth.

"This is my affair," he hissed.

"But I won't let you—" I was coming back at him when he used what we called our "last resort."

Long before we had agreed that, if one used the word "please," the other would allow him to do as he wished—the word to be never used except as a last resort.

"Barney—please," he whispered, and I quit.

After all, if a man chooses to gamble with his own soul, it's his own business. It was either the most brave or the most foolish thing he ever did.

"In a case like this," Dick spoke steadily, "the lack of another witness makes no difference."

"Oh, I'm so glad," she weakly faltered her relief.

I expected then that they would tell us something—at least their names. Why the veil of secrecy? Why were they living

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away from all other human beings? What was their story? I became as curious as a young girl. But they told us nothing.

There was little preparation to be made. The man had produced an old worn wedding-ring. The history of all the world's wedding-rings must travel a worn circle. He propped her up with more pillows as well as he could and stood by the bedside. Dick drew the prayer-book from an inner pocket rather slowly—for a moment I thought he hesitated—and I stepped closer.

Outside one of our dogs whined protestingly. The bleak dawn was dimly lighting the world. The lamp smoked a trifle, and the man nervously left the bedside while he attended to it. I had made a movement to do so but, somehow, felt that it was his business. So, and everything was ready.

"Dearly beloved," Dick's voice was low and strained, reminding me of the voice of a man about to confess a grievous fault, but it grew stronger, "we are gathered together in the sight of God and of man—to join—in holy matrimony—just cause or impediment—speak now or forever hold his peace."

He heard the woman call the man Jim so he read "James" into the service and looked a question at her.

"Dora," she whispered, and Dick went on.

It was soon over. Rather awkwardly we congratulated them. Then Dick asked for a sheet of writing-paper. The woman had sunk back on her pillows. I saw her eyes meet the man's.

"Oh, thank you, never mind," he mumbled hurriedly, "Never mind making out a certificate."

Why were they so anxious we should not know their names—now *name?* With what sounded like an inspiration he concluded:

"No, we don't require a certificate. As long as we are married in the sight of God, we need not trouble about what men think."

And so the thanks he gave Dick was a barbed shaft. My friend turned away so that he did not see the man fumble in a pocket and bring out a ten-dollar gold-piece. Just in time I moved my bulk between them, dreading lest Dick's traumatic conscience should see in the coin the symbol of a half-priced Judas. The man was puzzled at my frown and shake of head. He tried to look past me at my partner, who with a sudden exclamation moved toward the bed.

Dropping the coin—it rolled away unnoticed—the stranger got there first. She was trying to say something, but I think he managed to kiss her before she died.

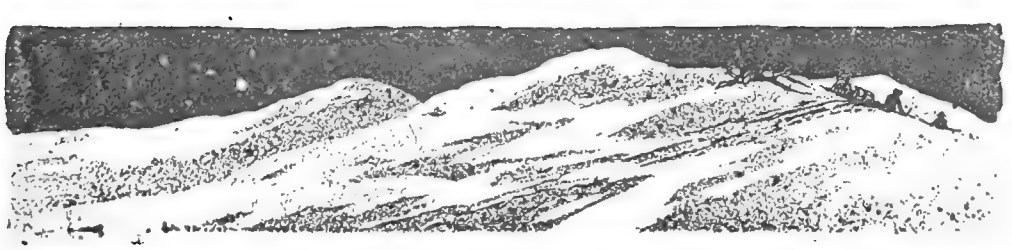
Again one of the dogs howled dolefully, and, as quietly as we could, Dick and I went out of the cabin, closing the door. Almost immediately the man joined us. His nervous, strained manner had come back to him. It made us think that there was something he was in a hurry to do; something he wanted to do, of which he was afraid.

"You won't think me rude—I'm very grateful, really. But would you mind—you see!"

Dick put a hand on his shoulder.

"We're going," he comforted. "It's all right—we want to be on our way. Good-by and good luck."

The man's eyes showed his gratitude. He hurried back into the cabin, forgetting all about shaking hands. We stirred up the dogs and drove away in silence. The day was wan but clear. A clump of snow-burdened trees brooded near-by. As we topped the rise, Dick swung his heavy whip. It cracked sharply. From the direction of the cabin came what might have been an echo!



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SALT OF THE SEA

A Two-part Story
Part One

By J. Allan Dunn

Author of "On the Account," "The Sign of the Skull," etc.

CHAPTER I

THE ELIXIR

Bawcocks and bullyes alle, who ys for ye Indies?
Where ye golden beaches lye; where ye pleasaunt wynde ys;
Where ye verdaunt lande beguyles; where ye dusky maiden smiles;
Who wyl saile for India, acrosse ye Spanish Main?

Rubyes for your sweetheart, lad, to mate ye lovyng lyppes of her;
Gleamyng dimondes, precious perles, fytte for ye queene's own crowne;
A gyrdle bost with emeraldes to grace ye slender hyppes of her;
Doubloons in your own poche to chinke inne London Towne!

Gentlemen Adventurers, who wyl saile for India?
Who wyl risk a stake with Drake for fortune and for fame?
Who wyl synge ye Spaniard's bearde—
Make ye name of England feared,
Raping treasure galleons 'tyl Phillip weepes for shame;
For ye *Golden Hynde* lyes ready and ye wynde ys inne ye saile;
Ho, ye wynde ys blowyng steady, and I heare oure Captaine's hail!
Who wyl saile for India? Gentlemen Adventurers,
Follow yn Magellan's tracke and sette ye worlde aflame!

HOW much my uncle was trickster and how much magician I can not tell. Perhaps he tricked himself. Certain it is he had knowledge, aside from the rituals he followed, books of Zarathustra and scrolls set down in strange writings that he affected to understand. Moreover I have seen with my own eyes so many wonders wrought by savage priests who are the magicians of the Indies and of Africa that it is not meet for me to say that the wisdom of my Uncle Zadik, as he styled himself, did not work wonders.

Beyond all doubt the amulet he wrought for Francis Drake held virtue. And he solved much of the rede of the great adventurer's fortune. Yet could not mend his own, which with my own heritage—for he was my guardian—had gone into his crucibles.

That day we were to have found the Great Elixir, the Red Tincture, the Philosopher's Stone, that magic liquid of which a few drops poured into molten base metal would transmute the mass to gold. The formula was now complete—so said my uncle, for I was not permitted to delve overdeep into the mysteries. And now naught remained but to make the distillation with proper ritual and due precaution against the powers of Eblis, the fallen Azazel.

I had drawn the five-rayed pentacle upon the floor with chalk, and in the three-sided rays my Uncle Zadik had written the five sacred names, Vohu Maño, Ashem, Haurvatat, Ameretat and Sraosha, and upon them placed lamps in the oil of which were blended ambergris and musk and certain Arabian powders. At the points of the rays were grinning skulls, and in the angles were ravens' wings.

The low room was dark save for the chinky glare from the furnace door and the jumping flames of the five lamps. Above us in the gloom of the heavy rafters swung the stuffed and dried bodies of strange beasts, the sea-unicorn, the Nile

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dragon, bats, snakes, lizards, with bundles of herbs. My uncle in his astrologer's robe of black, set with gold-stitched symbols of the sun, the moon and stars, with mystic characters in Arabic and Persian—the tall peaked hat above his venerable, eager face—looked all the sorcerer.

His white beard was tucked inside his gown lest it interfere with his compounding; his nose was like an eagle's beak, and his eyes reflected back the lamplight and the streaky furnace glow with strange hues. In the center of the pentacle was a carven stand of black oak upon which was the Book of Magic and All Wisdom, crisp with thick parchment leaves, bound with clasps of wrought iron, ready for the pronouncing of the spell that was to summon the spirits of Good and Truth, of Reverence, Obedience and Immortality to our aid and to hold off the powers of darkness.

The place was heavy with the reek of drugs and awful with the suggestion of lurking shadows gathering about the pentacle. Dread was my master, battling with the desire to look upon the unknown. For much of the grip of magic, to my mind, lies in the mystery of the preparations and surrounding. The weird beasts above, the emblems of death at the ray points, the pungency of the perfumes that raised at once a mist before the eyes and in the brain, created an atmosphere of apprehension and readiness to believe.

In that fog I was as a child who peoples the dark with monsters crouching all about his bed and whimpers for his mother, knowing that the angels are a very long way off. So, as the quality of my mind changed and superstition claimed me, I looked to my uncle with assurance and jumped to obey his orders for our mutual protection.

For now, I felt, we were committed to a desperate issue. To wrench from its abiding-place such a secret as the discovery of the elixir which would make us masters of mankind must needs be an uncertain hazard, bringing us very close to the borderline between the visible and invisible.

I knew there was a God. Then I had not been to sea and swung between sky and water at the whim of wind and wave but upheld by the knowledge that the stars of the vault above and the tides of the ocean were poised and swung by immutable laws; but I had searched the void through my uncle's glass for such evidences as he knew of the sublimity of the heavenly system, and my own spirit answered to the proclamation of the nightly procession that here was an order conceived and upheld by a Master.

And, if we sought to fathom secrets held back by an inscrutable wisdom, did we not challenge the ruling of that Will? My uncle held it otherwise. Knowledge was God-given and knowledge was a rightful heritage of power to those who deserved it by study. Such secrets were hidden as a spur to wisdom and a reward. But he acknowledged that the spirits of evil were the guardians of such secrets and would resent our interference. I was no philosopher, and I was doubtful and more than a little afraid. Nor did my uncle's instructions tend to reassure me.

He bade me fetch two candles in iron holders and set them either side the ponderous tome. Then I placed in the center of the pentacle by the desk a glowing brazier and above it a tripod stand having two rings welded to the supports. He himself brought with anxious care his still, two globes of crystal joined by a twisting pipe of metal. In the lower was the crude formula; in the upper, drop by drop, would form and fall the elixir, the boiled extraction of much poring over crabbed writings, seeking for ingredients and anxious work with tube and crucible, the *el-ikshar* that would turn dross to precious gold.

The globes were set and joined by the worm of the pipe, the brazier ruddy under the murky liquid. There was an open pattern about the rim of the brazier, and through these slits trembling splotches of crimson light were spilled upon the floor.

"This time we succeed, Aylwin," said my uncle. "We shall win, lad. All thy monies shall be returned to thee a hundredfold, and we will travel up to London. And I? Kings shall come to me as beggars!" he proclaimed with a swift access of confidence, his head flung back, one hand, shrunken and white as if carved from bone, resting on the parchment leaves, the other raised above his head.

"See that thou step not without the inner frame," he commanded. "Nor stretch so much as the breadth of a finger beyond it. Watch well the lamps and, if one flame lowers, refill promptly. The drugs within the containers will suffice. Yet move not

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until I have finished the invocation. By that time the mixture will boil. Then watch the lamps only. Mark nothing that thou dost see or hear outside the frame. I charge thee for the lives of both of us."

The lamps had come from some region of the sea that borders the land of Africa to the north. They were of stone, shallow, half-covered, with spouts from which emerged the floating wicks. I held the jar of oil carefully and stood beside my uncle as with sonorous voice he intoned strange syllables. Presently the mixture began to bubble as if it were chuckling at its coming freedom. Sometimes the chuckles seemed to come from outside the pentacle, first from one shadow-curtain then another. There was an oppression in the air that made the lungs heavy and the pulse first swift then sluggish. I quivered with excitement but kept my eyes steadfast upon the lamps. The coals shifted in the brazier, but my uncle's deep voice droned on. One of the lamps flickered, and I got ready to pour in the oil.

A cold draft swept through the tight-closed room. My hair lifted to it, and a clammy sweat broke out on my brow. I heard the voice above me falter. There was a swift scraping on the floor in the murk—and I looked up.

I caught sight of two green globes of fire that swiftly turned to crimson. I had a vision of white tusks and a slavering red tongue. Something vague and black—blacker than the darkness—leaped.

THERE was a crash as the tripod fell and the brazier coals were scattered. There was a howl as from some dweller in the Pit, half fiend, half brute—a pungent essence that appeared to enter through throat and eyes and ears alike—a blinding roar of flame that shot to the rafters and the descent of something that struck my head and neck with great claws as I staggered back, stepped on the smooth surface of a skull and went sliddering to the wall in abject terror.

"Son of Sheitan!" I heard my uncle gasp.

There was another howl, and the thing fled. Then a figure advanced into the wavering light of the scattered lamps, a figure spotted with lights from the winking coals that were searing the floor, a figure that looked like a giant spider—a misshapen lump for a body, twisted shanks and long arms that swung below the knees, surmounted by a face that twitched in an uncertain grin. And at the sight I gathered myself, for here was something human, if deformed; here was Peter, my uncle's assistant, his familiar some claimed, but though misshapen yet a man.

My uncle was cursing in Arabic, in a jargon of a dozen tongues that changed to broad English as Peter appeared.

"A murrain on thee, fool!" he shouted. "Thou hast lost the work of a year, mayhap of my life! Quick, put out those coals! Aylwin, open shutters!"

I flung aside the heavy draperies that had been drawn across the oaken leaves, unbarred them and let in the fair light of the Summer afternoon that we had forbidden to be present at our incantation. The door by which Peter had come from the outer room and street stood plainly open now. Peter was gathering the embers of the brazier into a shovel. The Nile dragon sprawled upon the floor by the overturned desk and the shattered still.

It was this beast that had fallen on me with its talons, the cords that held it to the beams having been burned by the explosion of the elixir. Of the precious liquid no trace remained. Its volatile properties had gone in the flare of gas lit by the brazier. The beam itself was scorched. So was the front of my uncle's beard, the bulk saved by his having set it inside his robe; so were his eyebrows frizzled. So, alas, were certain leaves of the book. They had shrivelled to crumbling brown rolls in the heat, and on them my uncle gazed ruefully.

"Gone!" he cried. "The incantation is burned. Where shall I find me a copy? Peter, thou mull-minded spider, thou blundering toad, thou squat, thou lump! What means this? 'Did I not bid thee stay away till nightfall? May thou be cramped! May thine eyes turn inwards! I will put a spell on thee for this that shall——"

The hunchback crouched in supplication.

"Nay, master," he begged. "I had reason to return. Fair reason. And 'twas not I. 'Twas the dog!"

My mind balanced. A dog! I looked toward the door, and there, creeping in on its belly, with fawning eyes, was a black mongrel, huge, curly of coat, its broom of a tail thumping on the floor in token of amity. This was the beast that had taken on in the mystic gloom the shape of a devil

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and, in its fright, ruined my uncle's alchemy.

"Did you not order me to bring you a dog so that you could use its liver for a divination?" asked the groveling Peter. "I bought the beast for a shilling from the tapster of the Blue Anchor, who had it from a seafaring man. I led it hither, and at the door it broke the rope that held it and rushed into the room."

"Dog or no dog, it held the purpose of the foul fiend himself," said my uncle. "Didst break my commands to bring this beast?"

"Nay. There were gentles at the Blue Anchor. Gentles who are in high fettle and who have gold in their pouches. I did accost them and suggest that they visit Zadik to know their fortunes on some great adventure they speak of joining. They are coming. They but wait to secure vizards."

"Vizards?"

"They would put the mighty Zadik to the best," said Peter and smirked. "They will he here anon."

Now the zest of my uncle after knowledge was such that, my own fortune having vanished, as I have set down, we were hard put to it to procure such drugs and simples as he required—hard put to it at times to fill our stomachs; so to mend this condition my uncle had set himself to the telling of fortunes and the sale of magic amulets.

I had little taste for this side of his business; it irked me to see him, as I thought, play upon their weaknesses, turn inside out the linings of their scanty brains, add this and that and cast a horoscope that sent them away content. But it paid well, and by some lucky strokes the fame of Zadik had reached even from Plymouth up to London and the court. My uncle paused in his wrath. Peter was forgiven. There would be gold to buy fresh drugs, mayhap secure another volume. He turned to me.

"Hold them in converse, Aylwin," he said, "whiles Peter and I clear this litter."

I knew well, as I turned into the other room, that Peter would give him all that he had gathered from the gossiping tapster of the degree and titles of these coming gentles. Trickery! I was sick of the whole thing: the smell of the place, like an apothecary's den, the vain search after hidden lore, the pandering to every craver for good luck that would spend a crown. I longed for the Devon moors, the breathing ribs of a horse between my legs, the swank of a sword against my thigh or the lift of a deck underfoot.

Sailors were my forebears; my father died in action years before under Baron Clinton, Admiral of England, Ireland and Aquitaine, leaving me a stripling to the care of a heart-broken mother and my magician uncle. there was an extra measure of salt in my blood, and my spirit chafed against the works of my uncle, be they mummery or wisdom or a hotchpotch of both.

To play bellows boy and page to him was a sorry profession; to spend my life in such a hermitage little to be desired. If my fortune was gone, let me carve one for myself under the free sky. To be free was to be fortunate.

The black dog slid a moist nose into my palm as I waited for the coming of the gallants, and I scratched him behind the ears.

"They wanted thy liver for a divination, lad," I said. "To probe thy palpitating inwards for a sign. That were hard ending for a rollick! Wouldst rather roam at will though food be scarce and a warm bed only found in dreams?"

He swung his tail in fellowship if not in understanding and thereby saved his liver for more natural purposes than his last purchaser intended.

"I have no shilling for Peter, lad," I said. "But it was my uncle's money, and he has shillings enough of mine, in faith. He dubbed you Satan? So be it. Satan you shall be called, and you and I will fare forth together and have a devil of a time."

The sun was pouring through the lattice of the window, and I opened it. The savor of the sea came up across the Hoe. My blood thickened; I forgot the fortune-seekers; my mind was made up. Bidding the dog lie still, I bounded up the stairs to my attic and swiftly gathered my few belongings—an extra doublet, some hose, a cap and rusty cloak and, pride of all, my father's sword, a true Toledo, long and keen and balancing in the hand like a feather-quill.

Down I came into a group of gallants who had just entered. Even to my rustic eyes these were gentlemen from London Town, in brave attire of what was doubtless

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the latest pattern at court. Three boasted green birds in their broad hats; all wore swords, and their bearing was eloquent of a conceit born of good health and high spirits. All were masked. One, shortest in stature of any of them, though by far the strongest to judge from the great breadth of his shoulders, was petting Satan, who muzzled to him.

There was a certain difference, a certain deference, that marked this man apart from the rest as of superior rank or dignity. I judged him for thirty, and I envied him those massive shoulders, also the ruddy beard that did not hide an outset chin. His hair was crisp where it showed beneath his wide brim, and his gray eyes caught mine and held them with a glint of authority that underlay his jest.

"We seek Zadik," he said. "And methinks his familiar has come to meet us. Meaning the dog, lad, not thee."

His companions laughed, and Satan came over to me.

"My uncle is inside," I said. "Will ye be pleased to enter?"

They went in laughing, the broad-shouldered one last. And with him went a certain something, not swagger nor bravado, but something that distinguished him from his fellows as if he breathed a different air from them, a bravery, a daring that marked him with no uncertainty.

"There, Satan," I said, "goes a man." And, hoping that I might learn more of him from my uncle, I followed them inside.

CHAPTER II

THE MAN WITH THE SCARLET FACE

PETER had vanished when I entered the great room. The remains of the still had been cleared, the brazier replenished and set to serve as an incense-burner and the Nile dragon had been restored to the beams.

The man whom I mentally dubbed the leader looked up at the scaly monster.

"See, Dickon," he said, "a cayman."

"It is a dragon of the holy river Nile," said my uncle, "from the sacred land of Egypt."

"Call it what ye will," said the other easily, "it much resembles certain river beasts of the New World that I have held acquaintance with. Eh, Dickon?"

His companion, short, thick-set and standing forever as if he expected trouble to break out—the which would find him ready to welcome it—grunted out an—

"Aye. I like not this mummery," he went on. "It smacks of witchcraft. See the scribing on the floor. 'Tis by such means they raise spirits."

"An they do," answered the leader, "thou and I are not afraid of them. For, if spirits can tell me how this venture of ours may turn out, I shall be grateful to them, whether the news be ill or good for my own person. Come, friend Zadik, thou art said to be a shrewd soothsayer. Canst cast my horoscope? I see there a goodly astrolabe—though in faith thou and I use them for different purposes. Mine has no such flourishes and pointers as thine."

He took up the instrument, inscribed in Arabic, and shifted about the wedge above the intricacies of the rete with a practised hand.

"Which sets thee down a sailor," said my uncle, "though indeed I knew that ere thou enteredest. Needs no horoscope. Lend me thine hands."

"Plain is the rede," went on my uncle. "Thine hand is as an open book."

"I have ever found it more serviceable when closed," said the sailor good-humoredly. "Make this not too personal, Zadik; it is the general fortune of our venture I would learn."

"Thou art its leader and brook little authority save thine own. See—here are written an anchor and a star."

The man gave a low exclamation, and the others gathered closer, I with them, though on their outskirts. But later I saw more clearly in the tracery of his palm an anchor stamped below his second finger and, in the center of the palm, a six-pointed star.

"Good signs for a sailor," he said. "Eh, Dickon? The star for hope and the anchor for safety."

"So that the anchor be not fouled and the star shines brightly," growled Dickon.

There was silence for a little, while my uncle pored over the hand. The fumes from the brazier filled the room with aromatic incense, and, despite the fact that I guessed well that Peter had supplied much information, there seemed a brooding mystery over the place, a prescience of a great power and a great purpose, centering

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in the gracious and resolute man who stood with his hands upturned to scrutiny upon the closed Book of Fate. Then Zadik spoke.

"The Red Star flamed at thy birth," he said. "Mars guides thy destiny. Look at the mounts, firm and high. Yet Luna shone also. See on her mount the *rascettes* rising up to Mars, telling of long travels done and yet to come. Jupiter-Marduk lords it over a straight finger. Honor shows there, and firmness. Upon the plain of Mars is set his star. Nebo, fount of wisdom, hath a noble representative in the little finger. See the swelling mount of Apollo next to it that bids for fame. 'Tis a good hand that grips fortune and laughs at misadventure. Strong hand, brave heart and nimble brain! Good attributes, Sir Francis Drake."

Drake! As the magic name was mentioned and I saw by the movement of the rest that Zadik, prompted doubtless by Peter, had scored a hit, my hand dropped of its own volition to the hilt of my sword. It was almost as if the blade had leaped within the sheath. Drake! The name was music to my ears, a bugle-call, the roll of a drum to the marshaling elements of my blood.

He it was who had despoiled the Spanish galleons and stormed and sacked their Indian cities overseas, bringing back a hold of treasure to lie *perdu* in his lodgings while Philip of Spain clamored for his head upon the count of piracy. A glorious pirate that fought only the enemies of England, as all true Englishmen not meshed in the web of the Inquisition and the Spanish priests esteemed the Dons.

But now, said gossip Peter, the queen had received Drake and, it was whispered, had taken many shares in the new venture westward to join which thronged scores of young gentlemen adventurers. His little fleet was even now in Plymouth harborage. And the instant regret leaped into my head that Zadik had wasted all the money that might have seen me joined to such a glorious happening. Then Drake spoke.

"You ennoble me wrongly, Zadik," he said.

"Do I so?" answered my uncle. "I was but reading what is written, Sir Francis Drake! I deal in things of the future."

The ruff on Drake's great shoulders brushed the lobes of his ears as he shrugged.

"Then the venture shall be prosperous?" he asked.

"It shall fail and yet succeed. Storm I see. Storm and treachery and a sun of gold breaking through all the smoke. I——"

Zadik's voice trailed away, and he sank into a leather chair with carven arms and leaned his head against the head-rest of Spanish bossing, his eyes turning upward until only the whites were exposed. As the visitors stood uncertain and before I could acquaint them of the fact that mine uncle was in a catalepsy in which he would presently see visions, his voice returned, deep and muffled as if speaking from the depth of some cavern.

"England's son and England's savior, beware of false friends, I say. Beware of high words and crossing tempers. Where the flint and steel strike, the spark may light unexpected fire. What first helped shall at the last undo thee. And thy first finding shall see thy last ending. I see a mighty fleet attacked by tiny vessels. They cling like leeches, and the smoke rolls up, stabbed by flash of fire. And over all the flag of England waves."

He came to with a gasp, and Drake flung upon the rostrum a leather pouch that chinked heavily.

"I thank thee, albeit thou readest a riddle in riddles. But it would seem there is to be full measure of fighting forward and some success. But one thing hast thou overlooked, Zadik. No fortune is complete save the length of life is foretold."

He spoke jestingly, holding out his hand again. Zadik flexed it at the wrist and gave it back.

"Fifty years of life," he said. "But they are over-full of life itself."

"Good measure enow for any man," said Drake. "For these 'bewares' of thine, is there no charm to spur my own brain or aid it? For to me thou spokest in oracles, and I am apter at fighting than at such puzzles."

"I can make thee a charm that will diminish all evil. But it will take time."

"We sail on the flood tomorrow morning," answered Drake. "An thou canst send it by nightfall to the Dolphin Inn, 'twill serve. But no black magic. I will have no demon's hand defending me."

He caught my eye and must have seen

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in it something that moved him, for he added—

"Send it by this young bawcock who wears a sword as if he would like to use it rather than a pestle, and I will send back the price."

"There will be no price," said Zadik, who, I doubt not, had already judged the contents of the pouch to a coin. "And the magic shall be of the wisdom of the wisest of all men—Solomon. I will send it."

Headed by Drake, the company turned and left the room, care-free, roving gallants bound for a golden quest. My uncle turned to me. I was conscious of my sword. But he said nothing, though his eyes dwelled upon it.

"I shall not need thee, Aylwin," he said. "Return at dusk, and I will have the amulet."

I WAS glad enough to be free for the day, and, Satan at my heels, I hurried across the Hoe to the Catwater. I was but one of a great crowd who gathered to look at the ships of Drake's venture. Idlers, wherrymen, loitering prentices, sailors from the coast lime-hoys and fishing craft joined in groups, discussing the ships.

The largest group had for its center a mariner in tarnished finery, a bright handkerchief bound beneath his broad hat, his legs in stained bucket-boots of red leather, his hairy hands curled by long handling of ropes. One of them held the hoop of a cage in which was a parrot-beaked bird of gaudy plumage, climbing about the bars with claws and black tongue and horny beak, pecking gently at the sailor's finger and ever and anon cocking its head to one side and ripping out a deep-sea oath to the delight of its master and the spectators.

"Yon is the *Golden Hynde*," he said, "farthest out. Drake's flag-ship and mine own sea-castle. Eighteen guns, lads, and twoscore of good men aboard to handle them. Next is the *Elizabeth*, a new ship, virgin as the good queen herself. Sixteen guns! Beside her swings the pinnace of old Tom Moone who fought off the Dons at Cartagena until they all stood knee-deep in blood and brine; fought by starlight 'gainst odds of a score to one and scuttled his ship rather than yield the *Swan* up a prize. He has named his new craft the *Christopher*. Behind them are moored the new *Swan* and the *Marygold*, fitted out at their own expense by gentlemen adventurers."

"Rubies!" suddenly screamed the parrot. "Rubies red as blood!"

"Aye," chuckled the sailor, "and emeralds big as hen's eggs, eh, old babbler? Gold crucifixes crusted with jewels and gold!"

"Gold! Gold! Gold. Pieces-of-eight! And blood on all of them!"

The crowd exclaimed at the bird's apt talk. Some of them bore off the mariner to a public for a rummer, but I stayed with my eyes glued to the ships. Little shallops were they compared with the great galleons they were to encounter; eightscore men was the tale of all that force that was to dare the might of Spain and ravish its treasure ships.

A forlorn hope it might seem to some, though not to the crowd that gazed, nor to me; for the men were of England's breed—of my own breed, for that matter—sea-dogs who barked little and bit deep, men of the bulldog strain, with Drake to lead them.

The ships swung to their cables, and they were gay with emblazoned poops, scrolled with gilding, with escutcheoned pavesades, banners and painted shields. The shining muzzles of the guns grinned through ports carven to mimic the jaws of heraldic beasts. And aboard, so ran the gossip, was dining plate of gold and silver, richly chased. And skilled musicians to play while others sang of high deeds done and to be accomplished. The Wintry sun shone golden, and the Sound gleamed silver and azure, and the wind seemed to bear a hint of spices, the perfume of rare flowers and strange trees. Between the ships and shore shallops were passing with sturdy figures at the oars and gallants in the sterns, their satin doublets and rich short-cloaks shimmering.

My blood tingled to be of the company. I wondered what Drake would do if I were to steal aboard and hide until the free sea was reached. My heart beat high at the thought and quieted again. What use for me with naught but the ache for salt-water left of all my patrimony, with scant skill of sword and seacraft?

But I hung to the sight until the sun sank and the crowd about gradually dispersed. I turned away with a sigh, to see

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a tall man clad in russet, none too fresh, his cloak wrapped about him, looking moodily at the fleet. He did not notice me or aught but the ships. A long sword hung at his side with the point sticking out from the worn scabbard like a toe from an old boot.

He wore a close cap that showed the strange shape of his head, a cone that sloped up from his shoulders, almost neckless above the limp ruff. His face was scarlet in the sunset; his nose looked like the claw of a boiled lobster, and his piercing eyes of black seemed unregardful of the bright rays that shone level to them. A sinister figure, I fancied as I passed, intent upon getting back for the amulet that promised me at least a sight of Drake if not a word or two.

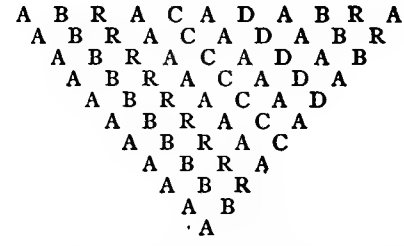
Satan's curly coat suddenly stiffened about his neck, and he growled as he caught the stranger's scent. The man wheeled, and one hand shot to his belt, and I saw the flash of a dagger as I called off the dog. Then his eyes met mine, and I felt him appraising me. My own hand was on the hilt of my sword; the stranger seemed to make my gorge rise sickenly with a swift, curious hate.

He had the glittering, beady eyes of a viper. His close lips parted in a sneer at my action, and, seeing Satan obedient at my heels, he turned his back again with a swagger of contempt and once more fell to watching the ships, where lights were twinkling now in poop-lanterns and mastheads and in the stern windows.

My uncle was in his chamber and not to be disturbed, said Peter. But the amulet was ready, and he gave it to me—a disk of gold swung on a golden neck-chain—eyeing me curiously with a side glance at Satan, who ignored him.

"Solomon's wisdom," said Peter in his voice that seemed perpetually pitched in two keys, like a youth's at the breaking. "*Abracadabra!* There's magic to offset the devil, ward off shot and stab. A charm of charms, young master!"

There was a mocking twinkle in his quaint eyes, one blue, one green, and a mocking note to his voice, as there ever was when he spoke of my uncle's mysteries. The conjurer's assistant, I take it, holds scant respect for the wizard. I looked at the scribed lettering on the amulet



The mystic word repeated itself in a maze. I knew naught of its value save for the catch of it. Jargon, it seemed, but there were many proven incidents of charms that worked. I stowed it in my doublet.

"It might well serve to stay a bullet or a blade," I said. "Farewell, Peter. Tell my uncle I am not certain of my return."

"Nor he of yours, young master. He has eyes in his head, as I have though not of so rare a hue. But I'll not say farewell. Best stay for a bite of stew-meat."

I was too much in the fever to be gone to think of meat or to mark the nature of Peter's reply, but I bethought me of the dog. He might need the food, and it would divert him while I was away. After the ships had sailed, he and I would fare off together. For I was through with necromancy. Life was calling. So I sat down and swallowed some scraps, feeding Satan more than I partook, and then I fixed a place for him in the attic chamber and left him melancholy at my going.

CHAPTER III

I FLESH MY SWORD

THERE was no moon; the streets were, as ever, ill-lighted, but I made quick work of my way toward the Catwater. Peter had given me general directions as to the whereabouts of the Dolphin Inn, and I judged that it must face the water, close to where the ships of Drake were moored, and that its landing-place had been the spot to which the boats I had seen were plying. But in the tangle of dim lanes shadowed by the overhanging stories of tumble-down houses I soon lost all but a vague idea of direction.

Here and there were lurking figures, skulking in doorways or disappearing in mysterious entrances. Some, I fancied, followed me. The neighborhood of the river was unsavory in both reputation

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and fact, and I was anxious to get rid of the golden amulet. An archway loomed ahead with a murky lanthorn aswing from a crane that stuck out from the keystone of the opening. To left and right was darkness, and I hesitated.

Then a length of orange light showed for an instant where a door opened to my right and was swiftly shut again. Unsteady footsteps came toward me. I was ready to outsword, but the sound was that of a drunken or an aged person, and I resolved to accost him if he were not too far gone in liquor.

The place smelled sour as I passed under the light, sour as with stale beer and bilgewater, with the taint of unkempt humanity. I could see nothing of the person who had come through the door, until suddenly a lump showed in the darkness. There was now no paving, only foul mud, and the advance, like my own, was noiseless. Then a gray face showed vaguely. Under a black hood the features looked like the head of a large bird. There was the glint of narrowed eyes beside an outset beak pointed up at me, and then came the mumble of a crone.

"A groat, a groat, master, to cheer my ancient bones."

The hag's presence reeked of liquor. Her breath was foul as a buzzard's. I had no groat, alack, and I told her so.

"So poor?" she whined. "But you have youth. Whisper," and she clutched at my cloak. "Shall I show you how to get money, young master; shall I show you?"

Without doubt she was the consort of water-front thieves, I thought, who sought a poverished recruit for her gang.

"Nay, mother," I said. "I do well enough. Canst direct me to the Dolphin Inn?"

Her skinny hand was clawing at me, and I felt it stop as she felt my sword-hilt. It seemed to give her some pause at this token of my quality. She stepped back, and her mantle flapped in the blackness like the wings of a bat, emitting a rank, musty odor.

"Aye, the Dolphin, of a surety. The Dolphin. Where the quality meet. I will show thee. 'Tis the back way but opens to the tap. I will show thee. Follow me."

She turned, and I followed close to where I had seen the lights show through the opening door. I could hardly see her, but I heard her chuckle and gobble to herself in the darkness. Had I been more worldly-wise I should have guessed that she would not have been so eager to serve a lack-penny like myself save for some purpose of her own, but I was intent upon my errand and trailed her close till she knocked upon wooden panels.

There was a little wait, and then the door swung open, worked by a rope from down the dark passage we entered. The door closed behind me, and I heard the muffled sound of music and of rough voices in rude song. The crone tapped me with a bony, pointed finger.

"Down the passage, master."

Again she led the way and tapped at a door, speaking to whoever opened it in some lingo I could not understand, save that I seemed referred to as a 'cove.' Then she pushed me forward, and I found myself in a low-beamed room with sanded floor, rough tables and benches set along all the sides save one, where was the tap-counter, topped by a netting of iron to protect the drawers from random missiles thrown at them by patrons who either resented the quality of the drink served or were maddened by it.

On a little platform were two fiddlers and a drunken man who tried to play the flute but marred his performance by hiccups that both spoiled the note and threatened to send him toppling from his chair with every "hic" and "hup." At the tables was a riffraff of men and women—a few sailors with tarry canvas breeches and hangers in leather belts that left the short blades bare, most of the men a shifty-eyed, undersized, sneaking crowd with here and there a bully of the beefier sort, all drinking with the wenches or making clumsy love.

A dance seemed to have just ended, though the musicians were still playing; the sand was scuffed in disorder. It was not the sort of place in which I had expected to find Francis Drake and his silk-clad gentlemen adventurers, but the thought came that there must be an upper room, and I looked for and saw an open stairway at the farther end of the tap.

While I halted just inside the door, with the man to whom the crone had spoken looking curiously at me—a white-haired man with a pimply face and one arm missing, the empty sleeve pinned across his breast to his shirt—a sailor advanced to the music

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platform. He was a slim young chap, bronzed deeply, with rings in his ears, and stood with one hand against the wall while he sang his volunteer ballade in a clear tenor.

At Lydford apple trees are pynke,
Heave and go. Lusty-o!
And of my father's cot I thynke,
Heave and go. Lusty-o!
It stands beside the river brynke
Where falling petals swim and synke,
Heave and go. Lusty-o!

His shipmates joined in the "Heave and go. Lusty-o!" The wenches turned to listen and watch the singer, and the rest looked on, half sneering, half interested. The white-faced, pimply man stood beside me, tapping with his nails in time to the tune upon the jamb of the closed door.

In Lydford towne there lives a lass,
Heave and go. Lusty-o!
She's like a flower in the grass,
Heave and go. Lusty-o!
I spied her through the bo'sun's glass;
She stood to watch our good ship pass,
Heave and go. Lusty-o!

In Caribbee a nut-browne mayde,
Heave and go. Lusty-o!
Awaits me in a scented glade,
Heave and go. Lusty-o!
Her dark eyes glimmer in the shade;
Her soule a spell on mine has laid,
Heave and go. Lusty-o!

Between the two my love doth shift,
Heave and go. Lusty-o!
A chip that 'tween two tides must drift,
Heave and go. Lusty-o!
'Twixt mayde and mayde I find no thrift
As unto each mine eyes I lifte,
Heave and go. Lusty-o!

A sailor's heart ys like the wynde,
Heave and go. Lusty-o!
That speedes him and ys left behind,
Heave and go. Lusty-o!
Like fyckle current ys his minde
That in each port new love can find,
Heave and go. Lusty-o!

God bring me back to Lydford towne,
Heave and go. Lusty-o!
Where waits my mayde in muslin gown,
Heave and go. Lusty-o!
God send me grace to settle downe
And with true love my life to crowne,
Heave and go. Lusty-o!

A parrot shrieked through the plaudits that followed:

"Maydes and gold rings! Gold! Gold! Pieces of eight! And blood on all of them!"

It was the gaudy bird I had seen on the wharf. His master was with him, and laughter rang out as the singer rejoined his lass and his messmates and the servers hurried to the little half-circle openings in the counter netting for fresh drinks. And now the white-faced man, who seemed to own the place, turned to me.

"Ye seek some one?" he queried.

"Francis Drake. Is he above-stairs?"

He slewed his pale protruding eyes at me appraisingly. I could note their glance linger on the hilt of my sword that was of gold, chased and set with precious stones. His eyelids puckered as if I puzzled him.

"Where else but up-stairs?" he asked.

THE couples were filling the floor for a dance, and I threaded my way among them, conscious of curious looks, and mounted the stairs. Near the top I halted at a bustling commotion and shouts of mirth. The hiccuping flute-player had fallen from his chair. I saw also the pimply man giving a whispered order into the ear of one of the drawers, who bent his head to listen and then swiftly vanished through a door at the back of the bar.

Then I went on through a door myself and faced a corridor lighted dimly by a latticed window at the far end. For a moment I fancied footsteps were coming up the stairs I had just climbed. But, when I listened, there was nothing but the sound of voices and music, and I went down the passage looking for the entrance to the upper tap-room or meeting-chamber.

Doors there were none in the corridor. Seemingly the stairs led one up only to go on to the window. It was not reasonable, and suddenly an apprehension gripped me and chilled and stilled the passage of the blood in my veins. The old crone's willingness to guide, the pimply man's greedy look at my sword-hilt, his whisper to the tapster, the character of the place and this passage that led to no sensible outlet—all took on sudden meaning—that I was trapped, fairly trapped in some rogues' den.

What their exact purpose I knew not. The metal and gems of the hilt would be enough to rouse them; it was certain that, if they found the amulet, they would never let me free to start the hue and cry. In my ignorance I had walked into one of those water-front dens where men were robbed and killed and their corpses—or drugged

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or senseless bodies—slid down chutes to tide-water. At any moment the walls of the passage might reveal a panel opening to an attack. And some of the bullies from below had doubtless cut off all retreat, if they were not ready to rush me from behind. I think I can fairly say I thought as much of the amulet's safety as my own; the prospect of its loss spurred me to action as much as my own danger.

I lost no time but sped along that grim, blind passage to the window, prizing its fastenings apart and stepping through to a broad coping of stone that ran about the housetop and from which the gables angled sharply up. The moon was just rising and threw sharp, heavy shadows. I brought together the halves of the window behind me as best I could and stood for a moment wondering if I had made a fool of myself through idle fears. Then the passage I had just left was swiftly filled with figures that appeared to come through the walls, and I fled.

To one side there was a perilous leap across to the nearest house, hardly to be ventured. Ahead, at the corner of the parapet, rose a cluster of brick chimneys thrusting through the roof. These I gained and dodged behind as three men came out through the window upon the coping. I could glimpse the shine of the moon upon the blades they carried. They looked in either direction and then came toward me.

The chimneys marked the turning of an alley that seemed to set the house I was in entirely apart. Opposite me, as I crouched, was another coping, and this time I essayed the jump and made it, landing like a cat upon the stone ledge. Back of it lifted the sharp pitch of the tiles, and I wedged myself into the angle with my heart pounding against my ribs as my pursuers reached the chimneys and halted.

"Which way has the springald fled?" I heard a gruff voice.

"T'other way, as I told thee. And in at the east dormer, belike. It was open to let out the sulfur fumes."

I fervently thanked the good housewife who had sought to rid the room of bugs and roaches. The men turned back, muttering that I could not well get away. Presently I scanned the new line of gables to find how I could reach the street again and make new quest for the Dolphin. Looking back, remembering other hazards I have passed, I wonder at my fears—though I doubt not there was real danger—but this was my first adventure, and the warren of water-front taverns was notorious as a meeting-place of ruffians and cutthroats who thought little of attacking a man for the price of a tankard and afterward slitting his weasand lest he bring them to justice.

As I crouched by the tiles, I was next to a dormer-window that jutted out and made a deep pool of shadow where I was hidden. I caught the murmur of voices faintly through the wooden side wall and fancied they held a hint of finer quality than those I had left in the tavern. If this was the case, I might fairly hope to trust myself to their complaisance to achieve an exit from the roofs and obtain true directions for the Dolphin. I moved to see if I could catch a glimpse of them through the panes of glass, which were dimly lighted.

There was a curtain askew across the window, and I peered in at a mean room devoid of hangings and all furniture save two chairs and a table upon which stood a flagon, two pewter mugs and a candlestick in which an ill-made dip guttered. The chairs held two whose faces were plainly visible. One was a man of handsome countenance, dark-haired, his cheeks above his trim beard flushed with crimson. He was richly dressed in silk brocade wherein threads of gold and silver gleamed, and about his neck hung a rich chain of heavy gold links.

He seemed to be giving directions to his companion, and, as I settled myself less precariously, he pushed across the table a stack of gold pieces which the other promptly pouched. I hung for a while before seeking admission, for the face of the second man was scarlet, his nose like the claw of a lobster, an evil countenance though a bold one, in a sentence, the face of the man I had seen on the quay and at whom Satan had snarled.

The casement was old; some of the panes were cracked and others broken at the angles of the leads, and I could hear them plainly.

"So," said the gallant. "There is the pay I promised. Ye have done well so far. I must rejoin Drake. Ye and my brother sail in Moone's pinnace, the *Christopher*. I will manage to get Bellew with me

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aboard the *Golden Hynde*, and the rest are dispositioned already. We shall find time for later talks. Meantime ye know what to say and do. Remember, the sooner the voyage ends and we return, the better."

He raised his pewter, and the other followed suit.

"To a speedy ending, Master Doughty," he said in a voice like the sound of a rasp on iron and drained his draft.

So far there was naught out of the way in their words, save the interest that the one called Doughty was to sail with Drake aboard his flag-ship and the other was also one of the fortunates to join the venture. But my entry would be unusual, and I did not fancy that the scarlet-faced man would be over cordial. Still . . .

Suddenly the latter sprang to his feet and pointed at the window, straight for me, though I had thought myself hidden. But I had forgotten what I now saw, my shadow flung by the moon across the broken curtain.

"A spy!"

The faces of both showed a swift apprehension and then sudden rage as their swords came out together, and with one accord they leaped for the casement. It was not my fortunate day, it appeared: I had no mind to be skewered on the scant parapet before I could give explanation, and I entertained no doubt that these two would give me chance to speak. To spring back across the gap would be to deliver myself to the others who might reappear at any moment.

Even while the one called Doughty tore the curtain down and the scarlet-faced man wrenched at the hasp, I dropped to my knees and lowered myself until I was clinging with my fingers to the leaden gutter below the leaden coping. It gave way with my weight, swaying down slowly as the ancient fastenings ripped from the stones, and I clung to it until it hung perpendicular and my grasp loosened so that I fell into the alley, lighting in a heap, confused and half believing my limbs broken.

As I gathered myself together in front of a window whose bull's-eyed panes mottled the dark, a slash of light poured out in front, and a figure leaped into the narrow way and rushed for me. I stepped back, drawing my sword as his blade darted at me like a serpent, spotted with the light from the bull's-eyes. I guarded it as best I could and swiftly sensed the steel sinews that guided the steel, grating aside my parry as if I had tried to prevent the closing of an iron door. Little I knew of passade, of feint or cunning thrust, but in desperate ignorance I lunged and felt the point enter a cushion that I knew was flesh. My opponent cursed and thrust again, and once more by sheer luck I turned aside his sword.

BEHIND me I was conscious of an opening door and a flood of light into which I backed even as a second figure sprang forward and caught the arm of him who would have spitted me next instant.

"Up sword!" said the newcomer. "No brawling, fool. 'Tis Drake!"

It was Doughty who had saved me from the scarlet-faced swordsman, and the next instant they had turned and melted into the black alleyway.

I turned to see Francis Drake in the light of the door from which he had so timely emerged with a little company of gallants. Panting, I sheathed my sword and faced him.

"Beshrew me," he said, "if it is not the wizard's apprentice! Hast brought the amulet, or did they take it from thee?"

"I have it safe," I answered.

"Good lad! And thou hast fleshed him. I saw blood on thy point. Let us go in."

It was a vastly different apartment that I followed to. There was a cheery fire leaping under a hood of stone and, in front of it, a great table upon which was spread various papers. One man was gathering up these last as we entered; three others were seated in front of the fire, toasting their shins and finishing their tankards of sack. Drake showed to these the amulet while I stood waiting, I scarcely knew for what, save that he had bidden me come in. He turned to me presently, chinking a couple of broad pieces in the palm of his hand which he offered me.

"I'll warrant that magician master of thine does not overpay thee," he said smiling.

"He is no master of mine," I answered, "but mine uncle, and all my own fortune has gone into his crucibles. Otherwise would I have bought a gentleman's share in this venture of yours."

I marveled to hear myself talking up so bravely, but Drake held a magic of his own

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that made for confidence and drew out the mettle of those who associated with him. And I was speaking the innermost desire of my soul.

"Say'st thou so; say'st thou so?" he replied and looked around at the company. "Art of gentle birth?"

"Aylwin Trevennion is my name," I said, "of this county of Devon, where indeed naught is left to me but some poor moorland and a ruined tower that marks the answer to an experiment of mine uncle's wherein vanished much of my heritage. But my father was a captain under Baron Clinton, the great admiral, and this is his sword I wear——"

A man in a plum-colored doublet, with a gray beard, cropped close and shaped like a spade, got up from the fire and stepped over to me. He clapped one hand on my shoulder and with a friendly motion upturned my chin.

"Marry," he said, "were my eyes quicker, I might have noted the likeness ere he spoke! And the sword! Know'st thou what thy father did with this sword?" he challenged me.

"Fair deeds, I doubt not," I answered, "though I know not much of them, for my mother followed him early to the grave and mine uncle rates such things as of small importance. It was brought back by Admiral Clinton after my father died in action, and I have been taught that it was worn with honor."

The spade-bearded one chuckled.

"Worn, aye, and used with honor. For in that same action, lad, thy father ran one Spaniard through so hard that the guard rammed against his ribs and the point spitted a second under the armpit and split his heart. Two Dons at once Trevennion sent to his account aboard the *Cygnet*. The same stroke was the death of him, for, as he tugged to disengage his blade, a slug from an arquebus laid him low."

I stood there with parted lips and, doubtless, with shining eyes, for of a sudden I seemed one of this gallant company. And then the memory of my poverty swept over me.

"He used the sword to some vantage, just now," said Drake. "What was the cause of the brawl, Trevennion?"

Now I was not minded to discredit two of Drake's own men, who might very justly have taken me for a spy—for it was well known that Drake had enemies even in the court. Much of England feared to overanger Spain, and even the queen, 'twas said, walked softly and talked sweetly with the ambassadors of Philip, encouraging Drake only in covert. So I answered that they had suddenly set upon me and said naught of my escapade upon the roofs nor my simplicity in not finding the *Dolphin*.

"Waterside randys, belike," said Drake. "They may have smelled out the amulet or noted the metal of thy sword-hilt. So thou wouldst sail with me? Adventurer's share thou mayst not have for lack of money, or I would find room for thee. Dost know aught of sailoring or of fighting with that sword?"

"I have sailed Devon waters in my own small craft. Of fence I know little."

"Yet art a stalwart lad and well ribbed and shouldered. Hast thy father's face, so says Angus here, and needs be art thy father's son? His blood should tell. Dost know aught of the leech's art from thine uncle?"

"I know some little of simples," I said, my face downfallen.

"But would rather make a wound than heal one? Yet thou canst doubtless write a clerky hand and knowest Latin?"

"I can write a fair hand," I answered eagerly, "and of Latin I have more than a smattering. Also can I speak Spanish and some French."

" 'Tis a prodigy!" laughed Drake. "See here, Trevennion—Tom Moone lacks a scrivener and interpreter aboard the *Christopher*. The place carries a double share above a seaman's. Wilt take the post?"

The fair wind of his favor fanned my heart to a glowing furnace, and I stammered my thanks.

"We sail early. Canst gather thy belongings and get aboard within an hour?"

"I have naught but a bundle—and a dog," I answered, suddenly remembering Satan.

"Ah, the black beast. How is he called? Moone will find place for him. If he can swim, we can use him on the beaches to fetch and carry a line. The dog can come."

"His name is Satan," I said, and at that they gave a start.

"Heaven forfend!" said Drake. "Thou must rechristen him. Since he is to be a sea-dog, call him Neptune. And now, go

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bring him and your baggage. Moone, here is your scrivener."

A square man, silver-haired, burned by the sun, gripped me with a grasp that had like to have welded my fingers into one fin, like a fish. And Angus followed him.

"We are to be shipmates, lad," he said. "As I was with thy father, we'll pledge thee in a drop of sack, an there is any remaining, and then speed thee for thy dog and spare doublet."

He spoke with a Scot's accent which is hard to set down; therefore I avoid it. He was esteemed a dour man; yet to me—

But that leaps ahead of the story. With my spirit still afire in my breast and the sack burning in my stomach, I ran back to our lodgings, this time having obtained precise directions. Peter was nowhere to be found; mine uncle snored in his chamber, and Satan, newly yclept Neptune, leaped to meet me as I gathered my belongings and fared forth again with him at my heels, treading the pave light-footedly as became one who was his own man and about to sail with Drake.

CHAPTER IV

BOUND FOR THE "MAIN"!

From Plymouth Sounde we started
To far-off Port-of-Spain.
Poor Poll was broken-hearted
And so was pretty Jane;
I kissed each as we parted
And swore to come again.

Haul, hearties all!
Pull, my bullies, pull-o!
There's lots of gold,
So I've been told,
On the banks of the rolling Rio

I'll fetch them gold a-plenty,
Doubloon and moidore.
Sweet Poll is rising twenty,
And Jane is just a score—
Both wholesome as frumenty
And sweet as apple core.

No more I'll roam
Across the ocean blue-o!
But settle down
In Lydford town
With her who proves most true-o!

Haul, hearties all!
Pull, my bullies, pull-o!
There's lots of gold,
So I've been told,
Along the rolling Rio!

MY UNCLE ZADIK, following the idea of the ancients, ever esteemed the number seven as a fortunate one, and there are many who count the number thirteen as unlucky; natheless, it was on the thirteenth day of December that we sailed out of Plymouth Sound over a calm, unwrinkled sea on a gray and misty morning. And it was on the thirteenth that my own real life commenced.

Yet the year ended with a double seven which may have more than offset the fatality of the thirteen. Fifteen hundred and seventy-seven it was, in the nineteenth reign of Good Queen Bess. And ye may judge for yourself whether things fell out fortunate for me or otherwise.

But I mention this the more specially because it was the beginning of certain prophecies of ill omen that gradually spread among the little fleet as barm ferments in the dough. Not only was the day said to be inauspicious, but, adding the figures of the total number of us all together—166—they made up the ominous 13. And when Drake, in the *Golden Hynde*, alone of all the fleet to complete the voyage, returned at last, there were three times thirteen aboard—thirty-nine of all the gallant company to round out the quest. And I was not of that number—whereby hangs this tale, as Master Shakespeare saith.

Beautiful Mount Edgcombe sulked in the fog; the gorse and heather-carpeted tors hid their heights, and our pennants drooped, moist with the mist. but we set out on the tide to gallant strains of music. In the *Swan* and the *Marygold* the gentleman adventurers made merry with song and tinkling stringed instruments, and aboard our own pinnace, the *Christopher*, the tarry sailors swung to sheet and tackle, singing to the lasses they had left behind them.

As we sailed, before the birds left us, flying far out e'er they wheeled for home as if to bid us good voyage, the sun sucked up the fog; the gray sea deepened and darkened to blue, and in the western sky vast banks of cloud rose up and made strange shapes of turrets and domes, the vision of the kingdom of our quest.

From the guns, from all the metal of the ships and the arms of the men, from the gilding of the scrollwork, the rays were reflected, warming our bodies and our

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hearts. My own spirit lifted in delight to each heave of our prow and the lapping sound of the wash about our sturdy timbers. Hey, but it was good to be young and to be sailing into the vast unknown!

It was all strange, all stirring—the strong, eager faces of the crew, the tompioned guns with their carriages blocked against the roll of the ship, the swelling, curving sails, freshly emblazoned with arms or fanciful device, the red cross of Saint George on each main, the talk and song, the romant of it all. Stirring and passing strange but soon to be familiar.

There were an even thirty of us aboard the *Christopher*, three men to each gun, in one way of reckoning it, packed like herrings in a barrel aboard that small but sturdy craft.

"Just room enough for men and arms to fight with," said Angus to me as, with him, I inspected the pinnace.

"But hardly room to fight," I answered.

"Never let that fret thee, lad," he replied. "We do our fighting aboard the enemy when we fight at sea. Shall see plenty of that before long. News of our sailing has gone to Philip by this, be sure of that, for England is a hotbed of spies and those who sway this way and that. If my Lord Burleigh holds the queen's ears with his policies, his talk of Spain's strength and England's weakness, his cry of wait and be wary—then all of us are but pirates. Even now Drake holds no open charter from the queen. It may hap, and God fend us from it, that, when we next sight Plymouth Sound, the land may be lit with martyr fires and those of different faiths cutting each other's good English throats in the name of religion.

He paused and gloomed up the sea.

"What then?" I asked.

"What then. Why, Drake will down helm and off again to the far west to a land behind the sun, a kingdom of our own, a new England for free Englishmen. But, I tell thee, lad, the hunt is up! Shall see great deeds ere we win through and back again. It is our hands against the might of Spain. The hunt is up from Guadalchiber to Lima. They will be waiting for us in the Caribbees to sink us; they will be after us in great galleons crammed with men, a score—nay, a hundred to one!"

The odds seemed frightful. A handful of men in five cockboats against the fleets of Spain! Yet in the eyes of Angus I saw naught but quiet confidence, and, while I marveled, I caught some reflection of his spirit. These men about us had sailed with Drake before; they bore scars of wounds; they had faced the odds and, with rough gibes and jokes, were still following their leader unafraid.

Angus read my glances and smiled.

"Men of the breed, lad! Men of the breed! Bred from sires who have fought for English soil against the wing-capped Norsemen, against the Danes, the Romans, the Saxons, the Normans, and reared sons who still hold the isle and their heritage of freedom. A fighting race, lad, born to the bow and bill and blade. Know'st thou not the couplet?

> "Englande's might and Englande's right
> Shall ever wyn at last ye fight."

If fighting was our natural trade, we were well equipped for it. As scrivener I made the inventory of our stores and there set down a lengthy list of armament. Besides the culverin that grinned back of the bull's-eyed ports, two of them swiveled on the poop, there were targets, pikes and fire-pikes, muskets and calivers, swords and dirks and knives, pistols, bows and partizans and double-headed axes. There were steel head-pieces, leather doublets and studded belts with light corselets for the officers, with drums and trumpets for the roll and call to arms. And a great store of powder and shot, grenadoes and Greek fire.

"Powder, provisions, men. Sleep where ye may," was Drake's motto in outfitting. The first two might be replenished by capture of the enemy; the last was bound to dwindle with every encounter, but there was scant room to swing a cat aboard any of the tiny fleet. I had a box off the upper cabin in the poop, by virtue of my rank. There also dwelt Thomas Moone, the commander, once carpenter of Drake's former fleet. Angus, the Scots laird, Matthews, the chief gunner, John Doughty, brother to the man aboard the *Golden Hynde*, and Trent, the surgeon, cooped up in tiny rooms.

Below us, on the gun-deck, were the men-at-arms—by which I mean such of the complement as were not sailors pure and simple, for all men fought who sailed with Drake. The rest dwelled in the bilgy bows, in a gloomy, evil-smelling cave where they

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slept in bunks tiered from deck to deck. Amidships was the galley and the common room, half-filled with stores and crowded with the indrawn guns.

I DWELL upon myself as I went about my duty that first day at sea—a green, raw lad of twenty-three, simple enough, for all my smattering of tongues and some politeness of breeding, the one thing strongest within me that ever present thrill of adventure, the glamour of strange lands that lay under the fantastic cloud city piled up in the west.

Angus, a Scots laird, landless, empty of pouch, a born rover, shrewd of brain, averred that our souls were composites of all the thousands of sires that stood in ghostly array back of the present generation, immortal in the last descendant, watching him as flesh of their flesh, spirit of their spirit.

And surely this surging desire of mine to see what lay beyond the horizon was not so much of my own individuality as a heritage, a thing beyond my own will, as much a part of me, mentally, spiritually, as the anchor-shaped blemish that lay between my shoulder-blades and had so lain between the shoulders of all Trevennions, first-born and male, so far back as the family legends ran. As much a part of me as the bubbles that dance in the springs at Tunbridge are a part of the living water.

And here I was in the fiery crucible of the Great Adventure, to be made a man or marred as one. Dimly I saw this, then, and the slap of the sea along our sides, the lunge of the ship, the onset of our consorts, the cries of the gulls, the march of the clouds, the bellying of the sails and the song of the cordage—all were a part of that same call within me so that the event seemed strangely natural and yet a dream, as of the sudden realization of a vision of sleep. The composite ghosts of all my forbears so spiced my soul that I appeared to myself to be doing what I had often done before. For, as Angus summed it up in three tiny words, I was "a born sailor."

In the hurrying bustle of departure I had but glimpsed the scarlet-faced man and learned his name as Simon Reed. Our glances had met without recognition. He wore a bandage beneath the sleeve where my blade had flashed, but our short skirmish had been too much in the dark for him to guess me as his opponent, nor did I see the present wisdom of enlightening him.

Satan—or Neptune from now on—had kept in my own cubby-hole during the first bustle of getting well to sea, and there was no connection in the bravo's mind between me and the wistful, shabby youth who had gazed from the wharf.

In the duty of taking thorough inventory I was obliged to ask him description of his personal arms, and, with his trick of sudden temper, he deemed the request a direct insult and refused.

"My weapons are my own," he said, "and I know how to use them. Neither do I lend them for others to malpractise with."

"It is the captain's order," I answered quietly enough, though my own choler, none too well restrained those days, was rising.

I did not like the man any more than oil likes water. We were of different spirit, far apart as cat and dog. The dislike was not uncommon. I have had others that defied apparent reason and have seen many examples.

"Then a fig for the captain who gives such orders," he said loudly, "and for the malapert who tries to bear them out! Tell the captain, your master, that, so long as my pistols are primed and my blades keen and ready, 'tis none further of his business. Am I not right, mates?"

His reply was likely tempered by his feeling toward me, reflecting mine own, but the swaggering bravado of it struck some sparks off the anvil of discontent that is ever present in such a crew, where all consider themselves free rovers, bound rather by a common craving for excitement and the free will to follow a popular leader on a popular quest than hirelings to be bound by rule. They were picked men, and they knew it.

"Nevertheless," I said still civilly, "I must have the tale to complete my reckoning."

He glared at me, and the scarlet of his face turned to muddy purple as if a shadow had darkened it. His hand fiddled with the lacings of his leather doublet and then shot down to his belt.

"Tally this one first!" he cried and pricked at me with a poignard.

I was wary of him and leaped back, loath

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to cross steel, flashed indeed with the memory of that steel-sinewed arm and wrist of his and reluctant to start a brawl in which I was likely to be worsted. Also I sensed that much might hang upon my handling of the affair. It would advance me none to be found brawling with one of the company thus early in the game. I was, in a sense, an officer, responsible for the authority of all the officers.

The men were watching in a curious, covert silence. I saw what Reed was after. To make a mock of me and my authority. To keep me skipping like a young fool before his dagger would raise a laugh at my antics, set me down and raise himself to the lead of some sort of following. I had a tablet in my hand, and with this I warded off the second thrust, delivered with a sneering laugh. I was driving my wits how to get out of the situation with any sort of dignity and success, when a roar came from the railing of the poop.

Moone was standing there, his face the color of a moon in a mist, his gray eyes like ice in the sun. The man was built like an ox. His thighs were bigger around than my waist and his calves swelled at the wide boots he wore. His shoulders alone in the fleet were wider than those of Drake, and he was built four-square with a voice in accordance of deep bass that could out-top a gale of wind. It held command, and it was backed with deeds that left no doubt of his prestige.

"Come up to the poop, you swaggering flame-face!" he roared. "You, too, Master Trevennion! The rest of ye, get to your tasks before I get among ye! To it, I say!"

They melted away from Simon Reed as shadows fade when the sun is clouded, not slinking, yet looking ashamed of themselves as men being caught in child's play. Reed, finding himself deserted, shrugged his shoulders and with a malignant look at me mounted the ladder.

"So," said Moone, "thou dost question the wisdom of Captain Drake's orders? Or of mine, for that matter? I give thee thy choice: either follow the customs aboard this ship or swim back to land with thy stickers and barkers, since thou art so chary with them. For, by Saint Jago, if thou stay aboard and obey not my rulings, I'll see thee dancing in the wind with a hempen neck-cloth!

"By'r Lady, sirrah! I brook no man to question my orders, and the man who draws angry weapon on another while aboard ship endangers the success of this expedition, and, if I did not hang thee, Drake would without shrift. 'Tis Lydford law with us, my cocky. Bite on that and turn thy words inwards. Lydford law, mark ye! Belike thou didst never hear of it—

> "How in the evening they hange and draw
> And sit in judgment after."

Reed's face flamed so that it seemed to give off the heat of the man. But Moone outmatched him. His words had the drive of a mighty hammer and bore the conviction that every one of them was spoken in true meaning. Reed's hand was twisted in the grip of his sword-hilt so that his knuckles showed the white of the bone; his knees were flexed; the whole man was cocked to spring. But he did not.

"I hire my sword—not sell it," he said. "When time comes to use it, I will let it speak the proper words."

Moone looked at him like a great mastiff.

"Thou dost rant much of thy skill," he said. "We'll test it. Angus!"

The laird had been lounging by the rail, his long face showing no interest in the parley. Now he came up, lean and lithe, with a certain catlike quality to his stride I had not before noticed.

"Master Angus is master-at-arms aboard this pinnace, sirrah!" said Moone. "It will be no disgrace to thee to take a lesson from him, and it may do you good. Angus, trim this cock's comb for him."

There was none on the poop save the helmsman, Moone, Angus, Reed and myself. The men amidships could see little of what went on. If Angus worsted his man, the lesson would be a private one and not degrade the loser. But I wondered if Moone intended them to go at each other with keen-edged and pointed blades. It smacked of an upset to his own ruling against drawing against one another aboard ship.

Just then a gay figure in striped hose and pointed shoes, with a crimson *roque* swung jauntily above his doublet, came lightly up the ladder. It was John Doughty. I caught a quick glance between him and Reed. Moone looked at the newcomer as if to order him below; then he seemed to change his mind. Only he took station

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at the head of the ladder so that no one else might arrive.

REED'S eyes had flashed at the order. There was nothing of the poltroon in the man, and he held a rare confidence in his own sword-play. The slight wound I had given him was no hangback to him, since they did not use the dagger together with the sword as in the Spanish and Italian style of *duello*. His long blade slid out blue in the sunlight, and he bowed it with its point in a plank, letting it spring back again to a quivering straightness.

As for Angus, he stood erect—not stiffly but with the pliability of a slender tree that, while well-rooted, stands even on a windless day with a suggestion of exquisite balance. No muscle moved in his face. He held his naked sword by hilt and point in an arc of gleaming steel.

We were surging along easily through a succession of long rolling seas, and our ship rode on even keel with the wind aft so that there was no advantage or disadvantage of sloping deck, nor were there any sudden lurches. To a man with his sea-legs the footing was as good as that of solid earth. The sun was high and like to favor neither.

Reed seemed to slide rather than walk forward and brought his rapier up to the salute in time with Angus. Then in a twinkling, the politeness passed, both figures leaped to supple pose with feet apart, left hands and arms flung up and back; the two blades engaged with a steely hiss, sliding and creeping about each other as the men advanced and retreated, and under their feet their shortened shadows seemed to wrestle and strike with knives in mock combat of their owners.

I was a novice at the game, but it was easy to see now why Moone had staked on the skill of the Scots laird. It was yet to be proven who was the better man, but there was small danger of Reed overwhelming Angus as, somehow, I had feared. I heard Moone's voice bark out once.

"Keep well back, Master Doughty, an you please."

But my eyes were following the swift interchange of pass and parry. Reed attacked from the first with brilliant feint and sudden sidesteps, with apparent openings closed instanter by the flashing circles of his sword-play. But Angus gave no footing that he did not the next instant recover. His face was still a mask, but it was a mask of confidence and somewhat of contempt that with his superb defense seemed to lash Reed into a fury of lightning lunges ever caught on the angle of the other's blade. Then, when they seemed to have been at it for many minutes, Moone spoke again.

"Now, Angus," he said.

I saw the laird's sword twist about the blade of Reed like a serpent. I saw it withdrawn with a wrench that pulled forward Reed's arm and brought him off his balance while a look of doubt came over his face for a fleeting instant. Then he leaped back, dropped to his left knee and thrust up, fair for the face and the eye of Angus.

The laird's sword was still in low *carte*, the point lowered, the hilt level with his chin, when Reed's blade shot up in *tierce*. The drop to the knee was baffling, the lunge a surprize from such a position of seeming collapse. But I saw Angus' wrist turn in its socket as he raised it and caught his opponent's point in his guard while once more his blade seemed to wrap itself about the other.

The next second Reed's sword was whirling to the rail, where it struck and clattered down to the deck. Reed himself had pitched forward to a hand-sprawl from which he looked up with an astonishment and chagrin that was ludicrous. Angus stood immobile, sword lowered, while Reed scrambled to his feet.

"There is thy sword, Flame-face," said Moone. "Be thankful thou art not sucking wind through thy ribs. Pick it up and give your Master Trevennion here the tale of thine other weapons."

Simon stood with a mirthless grin, like a fox in a trap. I retrieved his sword and handed it to him where already Angus had gripped his hand.

"'Twas a shrewd stroke," said Angus, "but I learned the parry to that *stoccata* from a French count, who had it from Mollendo himself. Else I doubt not that I should be lacking an eye this moment."

"And he a lesson," said Moone. "Hast got the list, Trevennion?"

I had and said so. Reed, rubbing his forearm after sheathing his weapon—for the muscles had been sorely wrenched by the twist of Angus' parry—went down

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ladder like a whipped and ungracious dog. John Doughty came up to Angus.

"Never have I seen such sword-play," he said. "I'll warrant yon swashbuckler loses his braggadocio manner after this."

Angus looked at him with a queer cock to one eyebrow, and Doughty flushed, hesitated, turned to Moone, whose back was to him, looked at me with a sour visage and followed after Reed. Moone strode after and stood at the ladder-head looking down.

"Two dogs of the same breed, lad," said Angus to me. "Only one of them is apter at the bite, but beware the bark of either."

Doughty had seemed to me a fine gentleman enough of polished manners, and I showed my surprize.

"I like him not," said Angus. "Nor trust him."

Later he told me that John Doughty had been charged with poisoning, raised against him by friends of Lord Essex; that he had never been acquitted but released from lack of evidence. Moreover, that Thomas Doughty was secretary to Lord Leicester and that it seemed strange that such an officer as an earl's confidant should join so wild a quest. Yet, when the truth came out at last, it seemed not strange after all. In return I told him of what I had seen through the dormer-window, at which he narrowed his eyes.

But he advised me to mention it to none for the present.

"What it meant I know not, lad," he said. "Nothing, perchance, but 'twill serve as a warning to us to keep eyes and ears open while our mouths are closed. Now for thy lesson."

I had asked him to teach me something of fencing, and he gave a glad consent.

"Tis what I am here for, lad, to make every man of ours of full efficacy as a fighter—knife, cutlass or rapier. For thee, lad, with that good father's blade of thine, the rapier. For look ye, officers fight with officers, and coat-armor can turn the edge where the well-thrust point may enter. Thrust, not slash, is your motto, for it is as easy to let life out through a small hole as a great gash and far more workmanlike and *gentil*.

> "*Punto, reverso* and *imbrocata*
> *Montando, passado* and *stoccata.*"

"But, before we take foil in hand," he went on, "remember that thou must make the most of nature, know thine own weakness and guard against being driven to it. Thou hast a long reach and a pliant wrist. Shouldst make a good swordsman like thy father. But, if thou canst not control the temper, neither canst thou control the blade. Eye and hand together, and the feet so that they follow and forestall by their own impulse. For thou must learn to fence as a viol player learns to know his instrument so that he gets his tune without thought to his fingering.

"It is not force that always wins. The storm may break the bough of a stubborn tree, where the willows, swaying with and from the wind, escape the damage. To gage the angle and hold steady with just strength enough to guide aside the thrust—there lies the nicety, saving always in resistance to outwear the other. A giant out of breath is no stronger than a winded dwarf until he recovers wind.

"Yon Reed has a steely wrist. For thee to counter it by equal effort would soon see thee gasping and whistling through other lips than thy mouth's; but nimbly to side-foot and exert such pressure as will ward it off and still keep thee in the field of attack, will offset the strength of his tendons, or another's.

"There are a pair of fleurets in my cabin. Fetch them, and we will have a bout with the light blades. For there is fighting forward. We shall not go unchallenged, and let none tell thee that these Dons know not how to fight when they are cornered."

I went below for the foils, little guessing how soon the prophecy of Angus was to come true.

CHAPTER V

WE FIGHT

I WENT on deck next morning a little before dawn, seeking for fresh air to cleanse my lungs from the staleness in my cubby-hole. On the poop I found Angus, who never seemed to need more than an hour's sleep here, another there, as the chance offered. The ocean was swathed in mist, a sea-fog that promised to lift with the sun. Already it showed faintly opalescent in the east.

Under it what water we could see slid along greasy and gray, spumeless, lacking vigor. There was little wind, yet enough to

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keep the lower courses fairly full and way on the pinnace. The poop-lantern was wan, the deck deserted; all things seemed at a lapse between night and day, suspended for the moment as a pendulum at the center of its arc. I heard a heavy tread behind, and Moone joined us.

"Up betimes!" he said to me, nodding to Angus. "There'll be more wind soon, and 'twill aid the sun to chase away this cursed veil."

"Call it not cursed," said Angus in á sudden whisper, setting a hand on my shoulder and clutching at Moone's wrist with the other, "for, by the cairn of Agga, it is our friend this day! Look—look at the sunbreak!"

The fighting sun was well up above the horizon already, and now it broke through the meshes of the mist and showed us something that made our pulses beat as if to time a sudden drum-roll. Vast, towering, yet unsubstantial as the fabric of a dream, its sails vague, its rigging ashine like a cobweb, its wet sides rolling lazily to the swell and flinging back the lances of the sun, was a mighty galleon of Spain, its bulk to us as whale to minnow. Indeed the great hulk suggested a sea-monster asleep.

The sun strengthened, and the tilting stern, emblazoned from water-line to carven rail with leaf of gold, flamed in a dazzling flare. Gun-ports were closed; we failed to glimpse a moving figure; it seemed as if an enchanted castle had drifted out to sea, floating by some faerie spell.

A deep "Ah!" of satisfaction from Moone brought me back to facts. Here was our enemy before our hands, if not delivered.

"By the Rood, we have them!" he said exultantly. "See that the crew is mustered silently, Angus. No trumpets, mind. Silence does it."

Angus left, catlike and eager.

"Shall we not warn our consorts?" I asked. "See, the mist has closed down again."

Moone looked at me in amaze.

"Dost think Drake dozes?" he demanded. "Nay, lad; leave it to him. We have our orders, to attack on the port quarter. Away with thee! 'Twill be a cut-and-tumble job, all over before those Dons have their lids ungummed. Thou'rt Devon," he added. "Hast seen the pack bring down a red stag of Exmoor? This is better hunting!"

I jumped below. The pinnace hummed like a beehive. Steel gleamed in lanthorns between decks and caught a twinkle from the strengthening sun as the men poured out, stripped to the waist for all the raw December tang, belts up to the last hole, wedged tighter with knife and pistol. There was just one mind among them all. The Don was sighted and we were going to pull him down Exmoor fashion.

And I caught the infection. I, with the rest, held no fear. There was a merry, if subdued, spirit about them withal, as of schoolboys bent on some prank. The gunners joined the rest by the rail where the small boats were outslung. Only the few deputed to stay aboard and work ship seemed glum.

Moone strode among us with Angus, swords in hand. I had a long dirk selected from the rack, half dagger, half cutlass, double-edged. I chose it, feeling that I should make a poor showing with my untaught swordsmanship in such a raid.

"Over with you! Lively now!" boomed Moone's voice, subdued to what he deemed a whisper. "Would ye have the gentles beat us to the boarding? Ah! Tumble in and pull the cords out of you!" he yelled as a red flash from the galleon, once more revealed, showed that some of the Dons at least were awake and had sighted our little squadron.

As we raced toward her, I held a glimpse of other boats converging on the quarry. Rounding the lofty stern, I saw figures swarming up the starboard steep of her freeboard.

"Drake's men," cried Angus from the stern of my boat. I was in the bows. "Pull! Put your backs into it!"

We seemed fairly to leap from the water. Next moment we were alongside and springing, as the crests lifted us up, to catch a grip on her chain-plates, clambering like so many urchins over a wall in fear of salting from the yeoman's blunderbuss. There were no boarding-nettings. Once on the wide rail we jumped down unhindered.

Already Drake's own men were aboard. I saw Drake himself thrusting his way through the press, saw the swift thrust with which he ran through a Spanish officer and passed on, leaving his man gasping on the planks. There were little eddies of battle that swiftly enlarged as more men joined the fray.

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The Dons had not been altogether surprized, but most of them had been caught asleep and below, and Drake at the stern and Moone at the fore were breaking through those who opposed them to reach the companionways and from those vantage-points cut down the Spaniards as they emerged.

It was all a hurly-burly of confusion to me who held no plan of definite action, to whom battle was new, yet filled with the lust that comes from cries and clash of steel and sight of blood and the sight of natural enemies. We all fought, methinks, much as dog and wolf fight, roused by the instinct of race hatred and so lost in the sheer passion of killing.

I heard Drake's ringing war-cry and the bull-bellow of Moone as they led their men. At the same instant, I saw across the deck, standing on the broad bulwark—a four-foot width of solid timber—with one hand holding to the chains, the other directing the swift motions of a flashing blade, a Spanish officer in light corselet and morion, defending the rail against boarders.

One of ours I saw fall back, spitted after a swift thrust and parry, and then I rushed across an open space of deck and sprang at him like a wildcat, yelling as I leaped for the rail. He turned his head at my cry, and I marked the clear olive of his complexion set off by his trim black beard, pointed above his ruff; the gleam of his dark eye, lit with the joy of fighting, bordered by a crescent of white that enhanced its menace.

With a superb coolness he seemed to mark the distance between us and then, with a wrist of steel, turned aside the slash of a British seaman's cutlass and lunged home his point in the brawny, upturned chest. Then he turned upon me as I flung forward. I swerved my body to one side, even as I warded off his lightning thrust with my long dirk, striking down with all my power. I, too, was wearing light armor, and he had aimed where the neck hollows between the collar-bones.

Doubtless he esteemed me lightly as an opponent. There was disdain in his face that changed to surprize as my defense swept his point down and aside, though I could not entirely put away the sinewy strength of his trained arm. I felt a check as his tip caught in the buckle of a side strap. His good blade bent like a bow, holding me off; then, with the force of his push and mine, it snapped close up to the hilt. He hurled the fragment at me, and I ducked, pressing in to strike.

His long arms engaged with mine. His left hand caught my right wrist, and with some trick he bent it backward till the sudden pain shot through the violence of my wrath, and, with a gasp, I knew I was disarmed. I tore free from his grasp, and we were locked, wrestling on the bulwark. The next instant we fell writhing into the sea. I took one great, saving gulp of air down into my lungs before the cold wave closed over us. Down we shot past the vast underworks of the galléon, weighted by our corselets, hampered by the fierce grip that both maintained.

How many fathoms deep we plunged, I know not. The madness of combat was still upon us. Like two sea-snakes we twisted and churned. I felt his right hand grip my belt, and my right arm, sliding above his left, sought the same hold. Thought of death or of mutual release came, I venture, to neither. We were like two bulldogs, insensible to aught save that we were locked in a combat to the death.

Doubtless the Don, since he could not shake me off, had determined to drown with his enemy. I held the same thought. Since I could not shake him off, I would cling the tighter. Struggling, we sank until the depth and the urgent need for air sent the blood rushing in a torrent to my brain—and with it the thought that soon I must open my clenched jaws and let in the deep.

My fingers, twining in his belt as he shifted eelwise, caught the haft of a dagger. It meant life to me and death to him. The sudden hope of reaching the blessed surface once more nerved me to a sudden access of strength. I could feel his grip sinking like a claw of rigid steel into my biceps, but my lower arm was free, and I struck upward, madly, blindly, on the verge of suffocation. The dagger sank deep into his armpit, and his hold relaxed. I remember my foot spurning him as I struck out with the last remnant of my strength toward the surface, my jaws locked to the final flickering of my will.

THE corselet weighted and hindered me. Only the despairing flurry of a vitality that knows itself on the edge of oblivion—that, and the craft of swimming learned in Devon waters until I

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swam as I walked—could ever have brought me to light and air once more. One glorious gasp of relief I gave as my straining lungs refilled themselves; then a wave slapped me against the galleon's hull, and I sank, with all the power gone from my limbs, with only the searing consciousness that this was the end. The water closed over me, my legs and arms helpless, loosened from my will, wavering like seaweed in the surge, the steel coat rendering me a plummet in the abyss—and that was the end.

The end of my own fight, for I knew no more until the cold air on my face revived me somewhat. Doubtless I had instinctively breathed in safety as I had kept my mouth closed under water. Something swam beside me; I was dimly conscious of a powerful effort that dragged me with it. My body trailed. I was on my back, it seemed, only my head and neck above the wash swashing over them at intervals that gave me chance to gulp fresh air. My left arm, near the shoulder, appeared held in a vice.

I lifted on a wave; its crest raised my neck, strength and mind growing clear. I looked down the gray slope still in a half-stupor, and there was something that thrashed the water with great strokes—a black and shaggy head from which shone two soft brown eyes with a glow light that said, "Steady, master, steady!"—a puckered muzzle above white teeth that were clamped into the sleeve of my doublet.

It was Neptune, left behind when we boarded. He had stood on the poop, the helmsman told me later, whining as we rowed away. Then the *Christopher*, with the rest of the fleet, had ranged up to starboard and windward of the galleon. Neptune had seen me leap upon the bulwark and go down with my enemy and, knowing that here he could serve, had dived headlong to my salvation.

At sight of the brave dog, breasting gallantly despite his burden, some further measure of my wits and powers came back, and I made shift to aid him. He would not let go, but I clipped out with my legs, and we made fair progress. Craning my neck, I saw men dropping over the side of the galleon into boats that came swiftly after us. Had we been beaten off?

But an oar was thrust at me, and my brave dog and I were hauled over the thwarts into the stern-sheets amid my own comrades of the *Christopher*. Chief-Gunner Matthews and Surgeon Trent grinned at me. Cheers came across the water. The seamen were hailing each other. The *Golden Hynde*, setting the example, was hung in the wind and a signal flying to reboard.

"We've won!" I cried.

"Aye, lad," said Matthews. "'Tis all over but the shifting of the loot. We caught them asleep like so many dormice. Killed a few; more quit fighting when one of them shouted '*El Draque*', and the rest lay down their arms before we could fairly get in action. Meanwhile thou, it seems, wast wooing mermaids."

The rowers laughed, and I flushed.

"A merman rather," I answered. "I left him behind me."

"I did but jest," said Matthews. "I saw thee close with the Don and both go overboard. I thought 't was the last of thee; though, i' faith, I had little spare time for thinking, for I slipped on a puddle of Spanish blood and, had I not kicked in the stomach the man who made for me, I would have had no further use for mine own. As it is, he made me a present of an inlaid pistol and a knife to carve my meals with. Not so fine as the one thou dost grip so fiercely."

Through all the moil and turmoil of fight and rescue I had held on to the Don's dagger. I still held it in fingers that opened stiffly as I examined it with a wondering look that set the men to guffaws once more. It was a splendid weapon, with tapering blade that held a slight groove on either side, and the hilt fairly blazed with gems set deep in the haft of solid gold. Trent took it and appraised it, passing it on to Matthews.

"Couldst thou but have held on to the Don and brought him in for ransom, I'll warrant thou hadst never lack of the price of a meal and a bottle an thou shouldst live to be a century!" said Matthews. "I'll warrant he had name and titles as long as a riding cable. Didst kill him under water, Trevennion?"

I told my tale, and I could see that I had lifted somewhat in the estimation of the men. Trent voiced their common thought, I fancied.

"Hast had thy battle baptism in good earnest," he said. "Moone was lamenting thy loss. He will be glad to clap eyes on thee in the flesh."

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Neptune came in for his brief petting before we reached the *Christopher*, and, at Trent's suggestion, I went below to change my sodden raiment. It seemed impossible that we had in so short a space mastered that sea-castle of towering decks, grim guns and nigh two hundred men-at-arms. But the cross of St. George had replaced the gaudy flag of Spain and she was our prize.

We were not to hold her, Moone said as he gripped my hand. Drake had no room for prisoners, neither would he slaughter in cold blood. The galleon was too bulky for us to use nor could we spare the men to handle her. So Drake had gutted her of jewels and gold, of wines and other stores, had spiked the carronades and culverins, taken over some ammunition and dumped the rest overboard.

All side boats were stove in and the galleon despoiled; her crew, disheartened and crestfallen, the humbled pride of Spain, was left to bear back the disastrous news for Philip to mumble over in his beard—how that *El Draque*, the Dragon, was loose again with the dragon flag, bearing his crest of the dragon, flying from the poop of his flagship.

Meanwhile our little fleet, less five killed in the brush, winged its way south and west toward the very coast of Spain, with pennants flying and music playing while in cabin and forecastle alike officers and men pledged in good Spanish wine the latest deed of Drake.

CHAPTER VI

THE FREEDOM OF THE SEAS

MOONE, generous as his girth, had made point to mention my exploit to Drake, and I was invited aboard the flagship to the evening banquet, where the various captains and gentlemen adventurers of higher rank from the *Swan* and *Marygold* gathered to celebrate the first victory. We were far too great a number to be served at table, and, accordingly, save for places set on a board at one end of the cabin, the rest of us perched where best we could, on transom, chest or cannon-trunnion—a gallant, gorgeous company for the main, in which, daw among peacocks as I felt, my heart swelled to be one of them.

The wine flowed freely, and tongues loosened with it, revealing each man in his true light and giving to all a fictitious equality. The recluse ruffled it with the braggart; he without melody essayed to match catches with one with musician's voice and ear, revealing, I thought, the secret ambitions of all who looked often at the bottom of their goblet, the hidden craving for attributes denied by Nature.

There are few of us who are not jealous of the talents denied to us and given others. Mayhap it is a sense of the unfairness with which things are meted to us in the beginning. There were many of the gentles from the *Swan* and *Marygold* who were of my own age, and all of these were flushed with success and the heady liquor reaved from the Spaniard's hold. I sat among them and learned many things.

The real name of the *Golden Hynde*, I heard, was the *Pelican*. It had been changed to honor a noble friend at court, adopting his crest. Some would have it that such change was unlucky, albeit not unusual. And others scouted this.

"Did not Zadik," quoth one, "assure the captain that the voyage would be fortunate?"

"He modified," checked a second, "the cunning oracle modified. Was I not there to hear him?"

I stopped a smile, wondering what they would think if they knew that I was Zadik's nephew. But even the one who claimed to have been of the party did not check me up with the fellow they had met in the outer room and taken short notice of. Drake, with Angus and the others who had been in the inn, had not babbled of my original occupation, and for this I was thankful, though not ashamed of it. But I would rather have been esteemed what I seemed to be, the son of a Devon gentleman who had served at sea with honor.

At the board with Drake sat Moone and Angus, also the queen's own admiral-at-sea, Sir William Wynter, second in command to Drake, captain of the new *Elizabeth*. And, beside Drake, one arm coiled in intimate amity about our leader's shoulder, was Thomas Doughty, late secretary to the Earl of Leicester. He was clad in a murrey-colored doublet of velvet of Genoa, the jewels in his golden collar outshining outwardly the plain black and silver of Drake. Also there were Drake's own brother, Thomas, and his nephew, John. Also

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Fletcher, the chaplain, jolly of face and taking his full share of the wine.

There had been much ardent discussion as to the object of our quest and the ultimate goal. Officially we were on a voyage for Egypt, but that, it was agreed, was but a cover to foil the Spanish minister. But now that lid was lifted with the capture of the galleon, and Spain would be on guard and in pursuit. Many were the guesses, and among them one hit the mark—though it was long before I or the others knew which one, and by that time the prophet lay in the deep sea ooze.

We were fed off silver plate and drank from goblets of silver-gilt. The cabin was richly hung, and the air was redolent of perfumes given by Elizabeth herself. Soft strains came from the instruments of musicians brought from the *Swan*, and every little while the talk was hushed when some one of good voice essayed a catching melody.

The air was rife with adventure. Among us passed the chart of magic, Drake's dearest possession next to the picture of his mistress upon the panel, Sweet Bess of Devon! It was a buffalo horn, and scratched deftly upon it were small islands with peaked crests and writhing promontories and tiny harbors. Also marvelous inscriptions, scored beneath in red, that set our pulses quickening and our thought roaming as we read:

> Here ys Golde. Manye Rubyes Here.
> Ware Witch-crafte. Here is Cannybals.

I was forced to tell a dozen times my fight with the Don, and many were the kindly but florid compliments bestowed upon Neptune, left aboard the *Christopher*, loath as he had been to quit me after having once snatched me from the deep. My poniard was passed about, and I in turn examined many pieces of loot in the shape of daggers, brooches, rings and crucifixes that the rest had gained.

John Doughty was with us, and I noted him drinking rarely and saying little, albeit his tongue wagged busier later on the voyage. Now he was all ears, and I thought I saw a covert sneer on his mouth behind his soft mustache as he listened to the talk. Once he made speech that colored my appraisal of him, though that was doubtless tinged by the remarks of Angus.

"'Tis a far cry," he said, "from the forecastle of one of Hawkins' coasters to this cabin. Now nobles stand uncovered before Drake, who once ran purser's errands. But he carries it well."

"To me your talk smacks of discourtesy if not somewhat of treason, sir," quietly said a tall gallant, lithe, blue-eyed and yellow-haired, with a scar across one cheek that showed like a thread of scarlet against his tanned skin as his eyes grew cold. "This is neither time nor place for such conversation, to my mind. Yet, should it please you to continue it later, I shall be proud to answer you with the best arguments at my command."

Doughty looked at him, and for a second hate quivered between them.

"I meant naught but gratulation to our chief," said Doughty, but his hand gripped the handle of his poniard.

"So be it," answered the other. "Such is his due."

"Think ye we sail under royal warrant after all?" asked one. "Sir William Wynter's presence should hint at that. I heard her Majesty subscribed a thousand crowns for her share."

"An that be the case, I trust we find rare booty, or my own portion against hers will be but slim," answered another. "Yet, look you, Spain holds the most of Europe and the New World; she grips the Netherlands. France hates Spain yet hates us English Protestants; Scotland is still bound to Rome as are the wild kerns of Ireland. England alone sits free within her ocean girdle, yet we are poor compared to Spain, poor in purse and ships and numbers. Dare even our Virgin Warrior throw down the gage?

"All England swarms with spies and secret servants of Spain. I tell you this: let us return laden with gold, and we shall be twice successful. Let us find none, and we had better cruise forevermore or settle in Cathay, for we shall be strung up at Wapping High Stairs as pirates and failures. Gold is what we are after, lads. Did not Drake so promise us? For what else have we put in our own broad pieces? That they may breed others.

"The home-coming galleons of Spain return with hulls full of gold and gems, with rich silks and rare carvings. We are to play sea-highwaymen upon their trail.

"And where runs their sea-track? I will tell you. I have a copy of Frobisher's own

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chart and I can prick out the very course that we shall fetch. Mark me, we shall sail to the south, down Africa, then east about the Capo di buona Speranza, through the Oceanus Australis and so by Madagascar to Cathay, the Indies and across the Oceanus Indicus Orientalis to Peru. I have studied the maps of Magellan, Verrazano and Frobisher, the globes of Behaim, Schoner and Hauslab——"

"And found them all different," said the man with the scar who had challenged John Doughty. "Yet there is certain sooth in what ye say. Did not Oxenham, Old John Oxenham, Drake's boon companion in the Spanish Main, steal across to the South Sea and launch a vessel on that deep Balboa called the Pacific, which from a tall tree on the ridge of Panama Drake once saw? Did not our leader make a prayer to God that he might set an English keel to plow those waters? Hath he not sworn an oath to avenge John Oxenham, whom the Dons hanged for a pirate at Lima? There lies your true land of plenty; there is the source of all the treasure brought home by your galleons; there can we best strike at Spain ashore and at sea, and 'tis there, I'll wager my share of this adventure, that we are bound—not by your Cape of Good Hope and your Oceanus Indicus but on Magellan's track."

John Doughty leaned forward.

"On Magellan's track, say ye? Then we sail to disaster. Magellan came not back. Wizards killed him by black enchantment on a magic isle that floats from place to place. Flour they made of his bones. And that way leads to where the sybils stand upon the rocks that spout fire, the Tierra del Fuego, where sirens lure. There is the Burning Void, the *primum mobile* that draws down ships and men into the jaws of hell beyond the Antarctic Pole, a roaring stream against which no vessel may prevail."

He spoke in a low, fearful voice, glancing at us from cold fish-eyes to mark his effect as the blood chilled in our marrows.

"Thou must be descended from Jonah himself," said the man with the scar. "By my faith, thou art a cheerful comrade! Drake would love to cross speech with thee!"

"Rail an ye will," said Doughty. "I have mystic books of Hebrew that give charms for the future. I have read and probed, and I see the fortune of this voyage marred by stubbornness."

"And I can see it marred by the croaking!" answered the other. "Hand me that gittern, Trevennion."

THE instrument lay close to me. I passed it, and Gilbert, for that was the name of the man with the scar, attuned the wire strings before he began to sing in a rich, clear voice, first to the immediate group of us and presently, as others listened to the tuneful lilt, to the whole company.

"Now, for a lass,
Some men will pass
Their lives in idle sighing—oh!
And, for a glass,
Some men will pass
All else until their dying—oh!

"Nor maid nor cup
Shall fill me up;
But thus I place my trusting—oh!
A gallant ship,
My blade at hip,
God send it safe from rusting—oh!

"And, when I die,
My word shall lie
With me in my last sleeping—oh!
My only bride
Close to my side,
My honor ever keeping—oh!

"Oh, why mope dull,
When life is full
Of romance for the daring—oh?
Thy sword unsheath
Our flag beneath,
And let us go sea-faring—oh!
And let us go sea-faring!"

Bravos greeted the ending of the rollicking ballade, and Drake called across the cabin.

"A cup of wine with thee, Sir Minstrel! I pledge thy sentiment!"

Drake's cabin-page came through a lane that was opened for him to where the singer stood bowing to receive the golden cup, part of the galleon's loot, brimmed with red wine.

"Drawers, fill all the measures up," said Drake. And, when this was done, "I give you, gallants all, another toast! To the fairest mistress of us all! The queen! To Gloriana!"

We tossed it off standing, and I saw the fire of loyalty and devotion in Drake's eyes. They seemed to meet mine for a second as he set down his cup, and then they strayed

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to two pictures that hung upon the cabin panels, the presentments of Elizabeth, his queen, whom he styled Gloriana, and Bess of Devon, the sweetheart whose memory kept his manhood unstained and the light of his chivalry to his monarch no less constant, to my mind. But he had noted me.

"Ah, Trevennion," he said. "I had nigh forgotten. I have something for a friend of thine—and of mine."

I went wondering. He gave me greeting to Thomas Doughty and those nearest him and then asked to see my dagger.

"Fairly earned, they tell me," he said. "But what of Neptune? I' faith, I named him rightly, it seems."

"Why—why, the dog is aboard the *Christopher*," I stammered perplexed.

"He should have been here with us," said Drake, smiling. "But he was not altogether overlooked. Here is his order of merit, bossed with some doubloons of our late acquaintance, the Spaniard."

He brought out a collar of fine leather on which his artificer had clamped gold pieces taken from the galleon. His goldsmith's hammer had effaced the effigy of Philip. As I weighed it in my hands, seeking proper thanks, Drake smiled.

"Best advise him to leave it off when he goes a-rescuing," he said. I answered something, and he nodded as the musicians began again.

"Let the players hold," he said. "See that all cups are fresh charged once again."

He stood waiting, and, when the servers ended their task, he drew himself up. He was not a tall man, yet he seemed to tower over all of us, and his face, noble, sweet yet commanding, shone so that one looked to see if some special ray were not directed upon it. Fire gleamed in his frank, gray eyes that yet held the challenge of command, and its authority and his voice held the clear call of a trumpet.

There was that in him that made itself felt in some subtle fashion as certain essences are held to penetrate the flesh. His pulse set the time for ours. In him there was no doubt, no hesitation; when he spoke, we were the needles that turned toward the magnet of his soul.

"Men of Bideford," he said, "and gentlemen of England! We have struck the first blow at the pride of Spain, a blow that shall not be brooked. The hunt is up. The wolves of Philip are nosing out our trail, I promise you. There shall be rare fighting forward and rare booty to be gathered ere we return. All this we shall meet like gallant Englishmen, as it may come, without imperiling the greatness of our quest.

"And of that, this much will I tell you now. We go not to Alexandria. Our course lies westward, to the back of the sunset. There, God willing, we shall strike such blows and do such deeds as shall make the name of England feared wherever there be cruelty and oppression. We fight not so much for our own gain as for the honor of England. We are her sea-knights, and her honor is our own. As we keep faith with each other, so shall we keep faith with her.

"Beyond the seas I shall show you wonders. Marble cities that are ancient treasure-houses of forgotten kings of Ind, their dim, lofty cellars piled with riches to exceed your richest dreams—gold and precious stones, agate and emerald, diamond, sapphire, sardonyx, pearl and ruby—hidden in the heart of mighty woods where the birds and blossoms are living jewels; where float vast butterflies like flakes of fire, violet and azure and gold, wreaths of bloom swung between spiring palms and trees—mighty buttressed trees that cover a rood of land with their outspreading roots.

"Now all this province belongs to Philip. New Spain, they call it, and there they rule with chains and fires and whips. 'New England' it shall be, I say, a dominion of the free where men may speak their minds and live unshackled. I tell you all that I have seen a vision and have heard a voice that whispers freedom and equality; that tells me that from the little island of our birth shall be wide flung the seed of liberty—from the loins of her sons shall spring a race to rule with justice and with mercy, to make free the paths of all the world by sea and land from where the sun rises unto where it sinks again.

"And to us, to us, I say, is given the honor of the van, the making of the trail. To this end let us plight ourselves above all thoughts of gold and empiry, pledging ourselves as knights to scourge the Spaniard from the waves, to lift the blight of warring faiths, to set the triumphant foot of England's queen upon the throat of tyranny and, by our brave and honorable example

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in this quest of ours, achieve once and for all the freedom of the seas!"

Now that I set them down, these words, even if I have remembered them aright, seem cold when I compare them with the ache, the flame, the desire, they aroused in all our breasts. We, too, saw visions as if our spirits were dull fledglings that had suddenly achieved wings. England the champion of the right by virtue of its might, champion of the weak, defender of liberty, nation-builder, womb of the future world. We island people to send out our ships to find the way and make free the trail to lands of plenty—and we, in that poop-cuddy of the *Golden Hynde*, the chosen van under so glorious a leader!

I say in all our breasts. Yet, as our huzzas reechoed from paneled walls and gilded ceiling, I saw John Doughty twirling his soft mustache with sneering eyes, and I saw—or thought I saw—Thomas Doughty smiling as one who smiles at the whimsies of children.

Each of us linked his right arm with his neighbor's left. And, so entwined, each passed his full wine cup to the left, touching his heart as it went, sipping first, then passing on the goblets in a perpetual chain of loving-cups until Drake's own came back to him once more. We tossed the lees and turned the bottoms up and so unlinked again and saw in each other's eyes the glad look of high purpose.

Soon after that Moone and Angus touched me on my elbows as they passed through to return to the *Christopher*, and I followed them. The night air was fresh and cool after the heated cabin. A crescent moon hung over the mizzen-yard. I looked up above the milky fabric of the canvas of the *Golden Hynde* toward the stars that seemed entangled in the rigging, and then—I came to earth.

Many of the crew of the *Golden Hynde*, with the rowers who had brought off the guests, were standing on the quarter-deck listening to the music and the song, sharing some sack that Drake had sent to them. They broke up as we passed, but one stepped forward from the shadows and accosted me. It took no second look at that twisted figure, the spidery legs and arms, the skull-face sunk between the bossed shoulders, to know that here, aboard Drake's ship of all places, stood Peter, my uncle Zadik's assistant.

"WHAT am I doing here?" he echoed to my question. "I am exchanging my rare skill in compounding drugs for the preparing of savories for the after-cabin. I have traded crucible for stew-pot, pestle for carving-knife and cleaver. In a word, I am second cook aboard the *Golden Hynde!* That is, when I am not suffering the qualms of sea-evil. But that, they say, is a malady that time cures."

Peter was always a bit uncanny to me. I had no doubt that he could cook if he set his mind to it. But he was frail, I thought. He seemed to read my mind and grinned.

"Oh, I am strong enow," he said. "Didst think thou couldst slide off to deeds of derring-do and leave me to con fools of their secrets before they paid your uncle for revealing them? The captain himself has praised my skill; the crew swears I pack good fortune in my hump. I am well found, and I am a free man like thyself. I tell thee," he added with a vehement outburst, "I would rather be scullion and wash greasy pots, afloat with Drake, than wed the daughter to the Lord Mayor of London."

" 'Tis the right spirit, Peter," I answered and passed overside to our shallop. So we went back over the dark, softly creaming seas to the *Christopher*. I sought not my bunk, save to let Neptune free, and we two walked the poop together until nigh dawn. I showed Neptune his collar of merit, and he was a proud dog when it was about his neck, albeit, as Drake had said, it was a trifle heavy, save for occasions of parade.

Ahead the *Golden Hynde*, that had the speed of all of us and was—by virtue of being flag-ship—ever in the van; while Wynter in the *Elizabeth* closed our rear, slipped over the long heave of the swell like a gray shadow, her poop-lanterns twinkling; to larboard swam the *Swan* with the *Marygold* to starboard—five tiny ships of less than a total of five hundred tons burthen, less in all than that of the galleon we had conquered.

Five ships and eightscore odd men to achieve the freedom of the seas for all the world at large. But, with the ring of Drake's voice still in my ears joining the hum of the cordage, the hiss of our trail, the sighs in the hollows of the sails as they seemed to breathe like a woman's bosom, rising and falling in the fitful breeze, it all seemed more than possible.

The cause was righteous, and surely it

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must prevail. As in a vision, I fancied the future fleets of England faring forth to found new empires in the West, where the crescent moon was now gliding to the liquid rim of my country's heritage, the sea.

Oh, but it was good to be young, to feel the red blood surging to the finger-tips! The unknown beckoned; the sinking horn of the crescent moon, reddened in the horizon haze, seemed a finger crooked at us to follow, follow, follow!

When I went below at last, it was to find Moone and Angus seated across the cuddy table, a bowl of sack between, Angus with a silver pipe between his lips, smoking the new *tabaki*, emitting blue clouds of fragrant incense as he listened to old Moone. They called to me to join them, and I sat down but shook my head at the drink. I was still in the clouds and in no mood for bibing.

"I had enough aboard the flag-ship," I said.

"I had enow, too," said Moone. "Enow to start a rare thirst! Take one cup, lad; dost look as if thou hadst the vapors."

He scratched at Neptune's ears as the dog made his round of the table and, returning to me, slumped heavily down, asleep in one eye only, thumping the deck softly from time to time with his tail to show how glad he was of our company. In sooth, ever since he rescued me from the deep, Neptune acted as it I were his property rather than his owner.

"And I had enow of another thing aboard the flag-ship," went on Moone, garrulous only in his cups.

As for Angus, the man had a stomach lined with Cornish tin; he could outdrink any man in the fleet and never show it, save by a certain ripening of his complexion, dyed by the ruby of the wine he had taken. I' faith we all took our share of Spanish liquor to wash down the ship's provender which was often none too dainty.

But Moone growled on.

"I had enow of those soft-handed, fine-feathered, gentlemen adventurers, as they style themselves. They make me sick, me, old Tom Moone, who never before knew a qualm at sea! Bah! With their pouncet boxes and their comfits, their perfumes and their tickle-belly gitterns, singing love ditties to the moon! A murrain on 'em and their fal-lalled furbelows. The times are out of elbow.

"Why, look ye at the men who used to sail with Drake! Thou knowest the kind I mean, Angus; thou wast one of us long enow. A hairy-legged, deep-chested, strong-armed bunch of bully boys, who, when they killed their man, killed him at a clip and there was an end to't. But those soft-muscled gallants, forsooth, know not a bowline from a pennant. They must wear silk next to their skin; if they find a hair other than that twisted in the fluff upon their upper lips, they must tweak it out.

"Sea-snakes and mermaids! They fear to touch a line lest their pappy hands might be soiled; they are forever cleaning of their nails when they should be sharpening their swords and trying them. Give me a cutpurse or a highwayman, say I, who takes pride that he is a thief, rather than these kidlings not yet dry behind their ears from the midwife's tubbing, who have conned the board pieces from their mothers' dowries that they might set a green bird in their hats and swagger on the Hoe, saying, 'I go to sea with Drake. Oh, gad! Oh, lud!'

"Oh, stinking fish, say I! If 'tis that to be a gentle, then am I glad I was found i' the gutter. They give me an itching foot to salute them i' the rear.

"Od's bodkins! One of the mincing fools passed me tonight, and, because I was sweating with the heat and the strong liquor, because he smelled tar on my clothes, mayhap, he claps a kerchief to his nose as if I had the plague and he some rare preventive in the 'broidered linen. Sweat? Why, I sweat more strength out of me in one hour than he will ever hold until some one slaps him too hard and makes an end of him.

"I'll warrant you I keep well to win'ard of them all, stinking like civet-cats an' titterin' at their own wit, too proud to mix with Jack the Sailor! What was Drake thinking of when he brought such trash as this along to fight the Dons? Was he mazed at court when he went up to London? Fight, forsooth—'tis we who will sail ship and do the fighting, too, that they may take the lion's share of booty after we capture it.

"I'll swear one of 'em put brine in my wine aboard the *Golden Hynde*," he muttered as he drained his cup and refilled it. "Never had I held such thirst since we went without a drop of liquid for five days in the Windward Isles."

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"Thy mouth is dry with too much talking, Moone," said Angus. "Soon thy jaws will creak like an ungreased tackle shift. But indeed thou hast uncovered the nub of it. I can answer some of thy troubles. What does Drake want with these comfit-eaters? Naught, but, since he did need their money to start the venture and fit out ships, so was he bound to promise them shares that were forbid us penniless sea-rovers who try to pave the streets of the first port we reach with the gold that ever burns in our pouches.

"And, having promised, he will keep faith. Drake is gentle born; so are Trevennion here and myself. Thou know'st the kind of fighting man that Trevennion's father was. And does Drake fight the worse because he can twang a gittern, turn a jest, wear silk and speak softly? Is he less a man when he casts off those clothes and leads us across the bulwarks? There are some among those gentlemen adventurers who will make good comrades. The one with the red scar across his cheek; Trevennion, he sat by thee?"

"Gilbert," I answered.

"Aye, Gilbert. I'll warrant him of the right mettle. As for the rest, this trip will mar or make them. Let them sail along in the *Swan* and *Marygold* with their *viols-de-gamboys* and their tra-la-fal-la-las! There is but one cause for fear, and that is friction between them and our Jacks. But Drake knows all this better than thou and I, Moone, old tar-pot! Better than thou and I. And he will find the remedy in his good time. Let us to bed!"

"To bed? With more sack i' the bowl? A fig for bed! Let's have a song, not one of your Love-me-Lady's but a song of the sea. Come, I'll lead."

He did, and, what is more to the purpose, he would have drowned out the whole choir of singers aboard the *Swan* and *Marygold*; so we left him to't, unmindful of our retreat, pounding out the swing of the tune with his cup, roaring so that my cabin door was poor protection.

Brave Francis Drake set sail,
For to fight, for to fight;
Brave Francis Drake set sail,
For to fight.
Brave Francis Drake set sail,
With a fine and pleasant gale,
But the Spaniards they turned tail,
In a fright, in a fright.

Come, all ye sailors bold,
Lend an ear, lend an ear;
Come, all ye sailors bold,
Lend an ear.
'Tis of our admiral's fame,
Brave Francis Drake his name,
How he fought upon the main,
Ye shall hear, ye shall hear.

Now it was off Port Royal,
On the Main, Spanish Main
That the Spaniard we did spoil,
On the Main.
Oh, we fought him fair and good,
Till his scuppers ran with blood,
And he cursed us by the Rood;
On the Main, Spanish Main.

So we filled our good ship's hold,
With our loot, with our loot,
Ballasted with Spanish gold,
Gems to boot.
Then, back to home again,
Leaving all their ships aflame,
In Francis Drake, his name,
Did we scoot, did we scoot.

Let us pledge a health to Drake,
Francis Drake, Francis Drake!
At his name the Dons do quake,
Francis Drake!
Here's a health to all his men,
May they soon to sea again,
Off to loot the Spanish Main;
Francis Drake, Francis Drake!

CHAPTER VII

THE *SAN SALVADOR*

CHRISTMAS EVE found us drifting rather than sailing down the coast of Barbary, baffled by variable winds and often by no wind at all. We had passed the narrow strait through which we should have entered to the Mediterranean Sea if we had been truly bound to Egypt. We had combed the Portuguese coast to good advantage, taking five prizes which we had borne on with us, not daring to transfer the booty under the very nose of Philip, much as we would have liked so to tweak it.

But each action meant the loss of a man or so, and to have waited for Spain to come out in force would have been but folly. We dropped anchors in a little bay where the trees rose in great masses and spent the day looting the prizes and setting their crews ashore after disarming them. Next morning the wind blew strong and fair so that we held our Christmas feast at sea, and once more I dined aboard the *Golden Hynde* with the worthies. For this occasion Drake had specially brought along

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some fowls and pigs so that there was good cheer, with brown ale for the forecastle and sack for the cabin.

"They call us pirates!" said Tom Moone, who had stowed away enough liquor to launch the *Christopher*. "'Tis a term of reproach without reason. Plymouth is full of pirates! Once they called 'em vikings, forsooth. It is pirating that keeps alive the spirits of our English sailors. Yet how can they bestow it upon us? Gadzooks, we are traders, say I! We sail forth ballasted with powder and with shot, and, when we meet with a Don who is in sad need of such commodity, why, we open trade with him, exchanging our munitions for his gold and such trifles. And, when we are reballasted with such stuff and are hatchful of it, why, we shall pick no quarrels but mount us our spirits for flying gybs, bend on our staysails and our studding-cloths and scud for home harbors."

"Being," said Drake, "such nice-spirited creatures as Moone here, who would rather run than fight."

Moone growled in mock anger, and the laugh turned against him.

"Now," announced Drake, "I have something to show you all."

At his word a cabin-page brought a scroll of parchment which was pinned to the panels of one wall while we gathered in front of it.

It was a great chart of the world, made but some years previous by one Mercator. On it the earth and its oceans were shown flat, as if a globe had been unrolled to a plane projection.

"According to all notings and comparisons," said Drake, "this is correctly set down. It accords with my own observation and judgment, and Frobisher and Hawkins, with others, have approved it of their own experience. Mark ye the Spanish Main, where Moone, Angus here and I and many of us have harried the Dons in their own places. Here, on the southern triangle of India Nova lies the land of the Amazons, the women warriors who outmatch men at fighting. Here is the Rio de la Plata, whose many mouths are choked with golden sand. So south to Patagonia and the narrow pass where Magellan ventured past the Land of Fire. And, below that, the continent of Australia.

"Magellan, gallants, was a Portuguese, and his name Magelhaes. This he changed when he became a citizen of Spain. As a Spaniard he achieved this passage to the Mare del Zur, the sea that is also called El Mar Pacifico, the smooth unwrinkled sheet that I beheld from the isthmus and swore to sail upon. There, between Tropicus Capricornis and Tropicus Cancri, lie Chili and Peru, the treasure-houses of the Dons where, at Cuzco, Lima, Valparaiso, Coquimbo, Arica and Panama, they pile the gold and gems from the ancient mines and temples of the Incas and ship them home to Spain.

"If a Spaniard achieved this Southwest Passage to Cathay, shall Englishmen be less daring? Shall we let Magellan's gage lie upon those shores. Shall we not follow him and, swooping northward, meet the galleons of Philip and, as Moone sayeth, exchange our powder and our shot for his valuables that, in his hands, would else be put to evil uses?

"There lies the harvest that I promised you, gentlemen adventurers! Quintals of gold and silver bars, rare jewels and ornaments, silks and spices from Cathay, ivories, amber, precious tea. Riches now to sink our ships, a worthy ballast to bear back again. And honor, fame, confusion to our enemies and glory to the name of Englishman. Art with me? We can not well turn back, for galleons and galliasses are even now after us. I, for my part, sail on, if I make the trip alone on this my *Golden Hynde* with such few followers who trust in my star and their own good right hands. What say ye?"

To my amaze, thrilled as I was with the prospect, I saw uncertain looks pass between certain of them standing there. Thomas Doughty stood with a smile that meant nothing. There were whisperings. Then Chaplain Fletcher spoke.

"It is a noble plan. Yet ye have said we can not now return. How shall our case be bettered when we have raided in Chili and Peru, if indeed we arrive through this Magellan's Passage? The might of Spain will have gathered; the way will be blocked with a galleon for every league."

There were assenting murmurs, and Drake's brows drew together. His eyes were like the glint of sun on steel.

"Master Fletcher," he said sternly. "'Tis your mission to attend to our souls. We will look after the welfare of our bodies. Yet, since ye seem to voice the wish of those

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who are strangely dumb, I will answer you. 'Tis true the way may well be barred. I doubt not but they will be melting down the very cathedral bells to make cannon to prevent us. Why then—what then? We will sail on. The seas are wide, but stout hearts may cross them. See on this map to the north. Here is marked California, hard by the Terrestrial Paradise. Higher Quivira and Anian. Others have ventured there to set these names. Frobisher believes this Strait of Anian leads to a passage to the north about this mighty land, opening an English highway to Cathay beneath the Arctic Pole. Beyond Bergi Mercator has drawn here a fancy of clouds to hide his ignorance. Let us dispel those clouds and find this new pathway. Or, if we find the waters frozen and the way closed, let us sail westward to Guinea and Camboja and so home again, girdling the world. Were that not a fair adventure? Or is it too high for your stomachs?

"Shame on you for gallant gentlemen!" he went on as some gasped and hesitated at the daring of such perilous seas in our tiny craft.

Whence would come the provisioning we questioned ourselves. What of the mysterious currents that lurked ready to sweep the overventuresome into the very gulfs of hell?

"Shame on you!" repeated Drake. "Man is the ruler of land and sea. Shall he fear to set forth and view his own kingdom? But now is the time for answering. Our next hover is at the Fortunate Isles, where, as aforetime, I hope to find supplies.

"If ye are craven or merely timid, there share the booty we have gained and set your own courses, choosing your own leader, for I swear, by the fealty I owe my queen, by the love I bear my own sweet maid in Devon, by the honor of my sword and what I have of manhood, I shall fare on—and doubt not there are some who will bear me company!"

With a surge Moone, Wynter and Angus shouldered to his side. Others joined him, myself among them. Drake gazed at the rest with a grim smile.

"Well, gentlemen?" he challenged. "There is no need for words. I have enow for my own ship's company. Let us put it to vote. Are we for Lima and the Far North or shall we part?"

Gilbert stepped forward, the red scar plain.

"We sail with you to the ultimate," he said. "I speak for all of us, or, if there are some I have misunderstood, I shall be glad to discuss the matter later when we arrive at the Fortunate Isles."

His hand was on the hilt of his sword as he spoke, and you could see his fingers itching for the chance of argument.

"All those of our captain's mind say 'Aye'," he shouted and looked hard at John Doughty.

But if any one did not answer "Aye," it was not because his lips did not open in the universal shout.

"So be it then," said Drake, smiling to the ring of our voices in that crowded cabin. "Thomas Doughty shall take his musketeers ashore at the islands and exercise them while he seeks the supplies we need. And now, a merry Christmas to you all! I would I could have served you with sirloins and barons of Old England's beef this night, but such fare must needs wait till we are back again. Then, I promise you, ye shall eat off gold platters and have hard work to ply knife and fork for the rings that load your fingers withal."

WE WENT back to our ships. Moone's face was scowling, and Angus' grave. I felt that they were pondering, as I was, of the halt before Gilbert rallied the spirits of the gallants.

"What did I tell you?" said Moone when we were aboard again on the *Christopher*. "Marry, but Francis hit them hard with his talk of their high stomachs! Wait until they have been sliced and plugged and mended a score of times. Hist!" he lowered his voice. "Where are John Doughty and Simon Reed?"

"They are on the quarter-deck," I said, looking out to make certain.

"Gossiping with the men?" said Moone. "If they meddle with my jacks, I will hold short talk with them, for all Doughty's lore of Hebrew and the like. Think ye the man is a wizard, Trevennion? I like not this dabbling of his in ancient books that hold strange spells. An he try to cast one on my men, I'll make him spell backward. Ha, that is a quip for thee, Angus."

"He tells their fortunes and makes them all misfortunes," I answered. "But he is all words. I have glanced in his book. 'Tis but some recipes for drafts and ointments."

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"I'll anoint him with palm oil," growled Moone, turning up his horny hand.

"They'll both bear watching," said Angus. "Tell Moone what ye heard at the window of the inn, Trevennion."

"I like it not," said Moone when I was through. "Look ye, these fine gentlemen of ours think Thomas Doughty is the true leader of this expedition, not Drake. I marked their covert looks. More, they think of sailors as the Dons do. The Spaniards, Trevennion, send their sailors aloft when they start to fight and keep them in the rigging, trimming sail until, when they are all picked off, there are none left to handle the ship. 'Tis a fool trick that Drake has oft taken advantage of.

"That is how these glittering birds would treat our Jacks. Look ye, they have to come to us to find a man to navigate their *Swan* and *Marygold*, but the commander is one of these selfsame gallants who esteems himself a soldier because he bears rapier instead of cutlass and, therefore, the better man. I tell you the sea belongs to sailors, not to sword-swaggerers, to such puss-footed, soft-fingered gentry."

"Drake knows all that," said Angus. "He is no dull-wit. But he will strain a point for unity as against dissension."

"Drake is bewitched by this same Thomas Doughty," muttered Moone. "The man is his shadow, his echo! When Drake talks of honor, Doughty caps it. Honor? The man has no more honor than ye could squash from a flea. I know an honest man when I see one. It is in courts they learn deceit, and Doughty is a master courtier."

"Courtier or not, Drake will give him short shrift if there fall occasion," said Angus. "But he will not hastily risk a split in our company. There is a canker of discontent aboard, 'tis evident, and, if the Doughtys seek to spread it for their own advantage, it is for us to offset it. When there is talk among the men of voids and witches, of evil spells and enchantment, we'll counter it with tales of gold and glory and pray for fighting to keep their bodies busy and their minds at ease."

Nevertheless the canker grew, aboard the *Christopher*, at least. Simon Reed was ever whispering, and John Doughty, with his Hebrew gibberish and telling of fortunes in the palm, spread sedition and discontent as a polecat spreads its evil savor as we lay in the long ground-swell off the Fortunate Isles; misnamed, I thought, with their wind-snubbed palms and wretched huts.

Angus came back from the *Golden Hynde* one day with a look of satisfaction on his lean features. Thomas Doughty had reported that there had been a poor season and that there were no supplies, not even pure water to refill our casks.

"And Drake suspects," he said with a dry chuckle. "He looked at Doughty with that cocking eye of his that means trouble soon or late. There is a rift in Thomas Doughty's lute already. He had better walk warily. Drake questioned the musketeers sharply, and they shifted eyes and feet while they answered him, though all swore to the truth of Doughty's report. But Drake has given orders to change about all the crews. He smells a rat. If he can snuff out the mischief, he will; if not, stand by to see him handle it!

"Go thou with me, Trevennion, aboard the *Golden Hynde*. Also John Doughty. I fancy Drake wishes to have both brothers under his eye. Here are the full lists, Moone, of those who leave thee, where they go, and of those who supplant them. I recommend Simon Reed in my place as master-at-arms. He is a good swordsman. Some occupation may leave him less time for mischief."

So, bearing Neptune with us, we pushed off to our new quarters. I was loath to leave the bluff old sea-dog, Moone, though keen to serve under Drake himself. Moone leaned over the bulwarks, muttering deep-sea oaths about losing us.

"Thou mightst leave me the dog for company," he shouted.

Peter greeted me, and Angus inquired about him.

"He seems shrewd," he said. "If we can trust him, let him keep his eyes and ears open. We shall have John Doughty opening his magic books upon the *Golden Hynde*. This move will suit him rarely. It will be well to know what he prophesies. For my part, I would send him and his brother packing in the next prize. They speak Spanish too well for honest men."

"I speak it fairly myself," I answered. "So does Peter, though less easily. He has a smattering of all tongues."

"'Tis one thing to speak Spanish," said Angus. "Another to think it."

We had barely weighed anchor from the islands when there came a cry from the

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crow's-nest of the *Golden Hynde*. Far on the blue rim of the sea we could see masts assembled and towering pyramids of canvas. Eight of them there were, Spain's galleons, hard after us to avenge their lost ships and Philip's humiliation. All thought of discontent vanished as we gazed at them, eager to come to grips, big though they were and many-manned.

I was on the poop awaiting the order from Drake to set the battle-signals. He scowled first and growled after.

"I will not run," he said; "neither will I engage. We must not imperil our quest with too great odds at the outset. We can ill afford to lose men at this end of the voyage. Keep the sails as they are and clear the decks for action. If they have the heels of us, they shall feel our teeth. If not, we will leave them until we return."

Bareheaded and bare-armed, the gunners stripped to the waist, with the guns shotted, the powder-boys ready, we advanced and sailed parallel to the Dons, setting down to leeward, closer ever to gunshot. But the heavy Spaniards fell behind, and Drake would neither put out nor take in sail. By afternoon their cloths had faded, and there were black looks aboard from those who felt themselves cheated. Drake stood alone at the poop rail, watching the great hulls sink and the high masts drop behind the curve of the sea, his face grim, gnawing his mustache and beard.

" 'Tis wisdom," whispered Angus to me, "but 'tis a pity. Naught like a rousing fight to chase off discontent. And I would put Thomas Doughty to head the boarders," he added. "Watch the sly devil hiding his smile behind his hand while he pretends to comfort Drake."

And then at sundown came our fortune. The night was gathering in a gloom of purple, dragging in its dusky mantle the unwilling stars, when out of the gloom loomed a galleon as high, it seemed in the twilight, as a mountain. The last rays of the sun split through the web of night and revealed the blazoned scroll around her rearing prow, where tier upon tier of embattled decks showed windows were glazed bloody with the reflected rays tinging the muzzles of her higher tiers of guns, frowning from the open ports.

The name of her flared sudden up and out again as the clouds wove together, *San Salvador*. She rolled on toward us, a somber mass, with our five small ships silent and dusky, crouching in the troughs of the high-surging seas, waiting.

A SHALLOP shot out from the *Golden Hynde* bearing commands. No lights were allowed save the battle-lanterns, kept well down behind the bulwarks, and the glowing linstocks beside the charged guns. Of these we had twenty aboard the *Golden Hynde*, from petro-cannon, throwing a twenty-four-pound shot, seventeen-pounder culverins and fifteen-pounder basilisks down to the little serpentines and rabinets of poop and foredeck.

But this great galleon, with the wooden towers and turrets with three rows of ports on the main hull of her, carried demi-cannon with bore of nigh to seven inches, charged with eighteen pounds of powder and able to hurl thirty-pound missiles seventeen hundred paces. We were pigmies attacking a giant.

Our own mid-decks were filled with vague shadows of men preparing for the combat; on the quarter-decks the lanterns occasionally threw off a sparkle from corslet or naked weapon; on the poops all was blackness as we watched her come on, the foam surging gray and high from her rounded stem while we hung in the wind like a pack of sea-wolves.

With slow and steady dignity the *San Salvador* passed between us and the land, like a city of the sea, her sides, high peak and lofty stern now blazing with lights as if she had suddenly opened her eyes to danger. A sound of music and of chanting hung on the breeze as she pressed by. The Dons were holding even-song in their chapel. Then we lost her side-lights and saw only the poop-lanterns and the glare off her broad stern windows. Low murmurs of impatience broke from the men. Drake, leaning from the rail of the poop, spoke sharply to them.

"Wait, wait, ye fools," he said. "Wait till we get the wind of them!"

The stars were now all hidden in the dark sky-mantle. To the east, over Africa, a slice of moon was struggling to break through a rift. The waves were black, liquid pyramids, with little foam but streaked with cloudy gleams of phosphorus. The run of the galleon was marked with

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the green fire that rolled like smoke away from her as she went. We stood silent, our weapons stripped, listening to the swash of the sea as we lifted high or dropped deep into the watery vales, awaiting the signal.

It came, blaring through the night and sounding down the wind as Drake clutched the arm of his trumpeter, standing at the break of the poop. Faint against the wind I caught the answering call from our consorts. Then a rush of bare feet, a few crisp orders, dark shapes hauling at ropes as the tiller was put down. Round we swung to ramping sails and straining ropes, unleashed at last, the gale behind us, leaping in full flight down the wind and yet ever to windward of the galleon in the quartering breeze, edging in, our topsail yards lower than her bulwarks, slanting in wild rushes down the hills of the sea until we were within two hundred yards of her.

Drake gave the word; the trumpet shrilled, and the roar and flame of our broadside lit the black crests between, staining them with prophetic red as our shot bit deep into her flanks, crashing through the stout timbers and searching our her vitals. Once more the trumpets called a fanfaron adown our little line, and it was down helm for all and away again, to return like wheeling sea-birds, soaring about her clumsy bulk on the driving seas, firing on the crests, reloading in the dip, firing again close to her water-line.

Time after time the demi-cannon belched a reply that shook us with the broken fury of the air, the chain-shot whistling through our topsail-yards in impotent effort. But we danced over the waves at will, handled by our tarry Jacks as children play with a familiar toy, attacking from bow and stern, stinging and tearing, snarling, worrying as her randon musketry crackled high overhead and great flares broke out in a vain effort to find us.

The galleon plunged like some blind monster bewildered in a bog, lumbering on while savage spearmen rain their javelins.

High above all the uproar rang out Drake's cry—

"Grapple and board!"

The stalwart seamen shouted to it, and the trumpeter flung the order down our line. The sheets were inhauled, and we shot down under the bulge of the *San Salvador*, safe from big guns or musketry, safe from the Greek fire that they tried to toss on our decks. The grapples were thrown, great buffer-balls of hemp were put between us and the Don's bilge-keels, and all the crew rushed to our poop whence they could better leap upward.

One man sees but one aspect of the fight and misses most of it, save from the re-telling after the fight is won. It was a wild, thrilling turmoil. In the maintop Drake had rigged a barrel of powder with a fuse, and, as we started to climb that lofty free-board that still belched forth broadsides above our heads, this mine was deftly hurled aboard the Spaniard, sputtering. It burst in a red roar, an upflare of scarlet flame amid wild shrieks from the decks we could not see. In the flare flying bodies and fragments reared and fell.

Those of our men who carried pikes had blazoned them with cloths soaked in pitch and oils, streaming wild-fire and mottling us all with scarlet as we scrambled up, swords and cutlasses in hand. A few fired flaming arrows to curve above the Don's bulwarks, and others tossed grenadoes to cover our boarding.

We stood upon the hot and smoking muzzles of their guns for stances to fasten ropes to plates and chains and swarmed up them, conscious of our other crews attacking aft and fore of us, keen to uphold Drake's prestige and be the first aboard. Drake hauled himself up hand over hand, his battle-sword, heavy, two-handed, dangling in my face as I followed. To my right was Angus, cool as always, and then the seamen, cursing, laughing, shouting.

"A Drake! A Drake!"

Drake rode the massive bulwark and leaped down, swinging his broadsword, hallooing us on. I saw him cut down two with a mighty double swoop that clove one through the shoulder, shearing off his arm, and split the other's pate as if it were a turnip.

Then my own man was on me. My blade grated against his with all the passion of the fight and the mad courage born of the shouting and the flames, the trembling of the ship under the roar of the great guns fired beneath. I lunged, and my sword sank deep, deep to the hilt. I had run through his entrails, and his warm blood gushed out upon me as I withdrew.

Somewhere I heard the bellow of Moone—

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"Down, dogs, down!"

It was a wild exultation, a clatter of steel, whiffs of burned powder, spits of flame. I struck aside one leveled pistol as it was fired so close it seared my face, then sprang on after my leader. Angus was beside me, fighting silently, decking his man and striding over him. I saw Reed, high-booted, kick one man fiercely in the shins while he drew his sword from another's flesh. I saw the kicked one wince, shouting with the pain, and the next instant Reed had run him through. I marked the trick for later use.

Once I slipped on a pool of blood, and some one stabbed fiercely at me. A blade came between me and the stroke, severing the sinews of the fellow's wrist, and Angus caught me by the elbow so that I recovered myself. All about was stamping, deep-breathing and hoarse cries of "A Drake! A Drake!" that changed to shriller shouts from the Spaniards of "*El Draque! Draque! Perditos!*"

The sudden fierce rally ended. I broke through to see Drake bowing before the Spanish captain, receiving his sword, our own men drawn back with their dripping cutlasses and pikes set to the deck, grinning like checked hounds at the death.

The cross-lights from the moon, the lanterns and pike-fires shone on a heap of weapons flung down by the surrendering Spaniards, on tonsured monks in the background looking dourly at us, on the sooty faces and rolling eyeballs of slaves and the chagrined, fearful faces of the fighting men, on the sailors peering from aloft. The fight was over. The *San Salvador* was ours.

Ever close by Drake was Thomas Doughty, setting a hand to Drake's shoulder while he whispered in his ear. Drake turned to him.

"Take ye charge of this galleon, Doughty," said our leader. "My brother shall be your navigator and second in command. Take twenty men for guard. Since ye speak Spanish, ye can use the galleon's sailors. Hold us in convoy till we reach the Verdant Isles. Treat our foes with all courtesy. They shall not be held to ransom. It shall suffice that they may be able to tell how Drake's men fight."

"What would Moone think of that?" I asked Angus presently. "Drake's own brother second in command to Doughty! It will set Doughty high among the gallants' opinions."

"Tut, Trevennion," answered Angus. "Drake is no fledgling to be caught with chaff. The higher Doughty mounts, the farther he may fall. If he has rope enow, he may yet hang himself. Trouble not about Drake. Remind me to give thee a wrist lesson tomorrow. Thou art apt to thrust overhanded, which makes a hard withdrawal."

"But," I said, "Doughty ——"

"I would not wonder," he said, "if Doughty, thinking himself too secure, may show his hand too soon. There may be more to this than just his own ambitions. And Drake is no dull-wit. He knows other ways of fence than with the sword."

Neptune leaped at me as we went aboard, sniffing at the blood upon me and scenting at once that it was not mine own—at which he manifested such delight as nearly knocked me over. From me he rushed to Drake and fawned upon him, getting a kindly pat. Our grapples were cast off, and soon we set sail with the great galleon gliding in our midst, a Triton among minnows, while we quaffed refreshing drafts of wine and fought the battle over till reaction set in and sleep claimed us.

CHAPTER VIII

DOUGHTY SLIPS—AND RECOVERS

ABOARD the *Golden Hynde* there was little sign of disaffection, yet I imagined it breeding aboard the *San Salvador*, where Doughty and his brother were free to make up their moves. There was one comfort. Besides picking his brother and Reed for the guard, Thomas Doughty had taken over Peter as cook, the men not relishing the garlicked dishes of the Don's galley and being wary against poisoning. The hunchback would see most of what was going on and hear much.

Meanwhile I puzzled about what Angus had said of something back of Doughty's personal ambition, and, after a bout with the swords, I pinned him down to talking of it—no easy task.

"I know not," he said. "But such men as Drake have ever had those about them who would snatch the glory for themselves. Doughty has Leicester's ear at home. He

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is mixed in the shifting policies at court. That talk at the inn would tend to show he means to mar the voyage and, mayhap, lay the blame on Drake. He may mean merely to set himself up as a commander of gentlemen volunteers and maroon Drake if he can bring about a mutiny, shaping the course of the voyage to his own ends. I know not.

"But Columbus had Pinzon of the caraval *Pinta*, who tried to supplant him. Mendoza, Quesada; Cartagena and Gomes attempted rebellion against Magellan, and, though they were hanged, drawn and quartered, his ships left him and returned to Spain. This Doughty has a maggot of treachery in his brain. His venom is of such kind and quantity that he must void it. Time will show."

The wisdom of the Scots laird was soon shown. For, when we arrived at the harborage and Drake went aboard the galleon with us, his officers, to determine the disposition of the prisoners and selection of the booty, Doughty came hurrying to meet us with a fine show of indignation and a blustering voice.

"There has been much prate of pirates, Francis Drake," he said. "Now let me show you who is the chief pirate among us all. It is your brother who has spied upon all my actions on this ship, our prize, doubtless to report back to you to my discredit. Yet has he found time to pick for his own uses the property that is common to the crews; to divert to his own gain the most precious thing of all this cargo, traitor and robber to us all!"

He blurted this out upon the quarterdeck, and I saw Drake's countenance grow stern as he turned to the accused man while the rest of us stood wondering.

"Answer him, brother," he said shortly.

"Of what am I accused?" asked Thomas Drake, looking straight at Doughty.

"Who saw you wear that chain of rubies before last night?" demanded Doughty.

We all looked. Blazing about the neck of Thomas Drake was a string of rubies worth a king's ransom, so fiery that our eyes winked at their brilliance where their glory challenged the rays of the sun itself.

"Doughty knows," he answered, "for he was with me. Yet 'tis his word against mine, for the man from whom I got them is but now dead. It was at midnight that we were told a prisoner, an English prisoner, craved a word with us. We found him but by accident, dying in a noxious, hidden pit close to the bilge, o'errun with rats and roaches, chained to the sodden timbers far below. He could tell us but little. His thoughts rambled for the most on Devon lanes, but he loosed his stained and ragged doublet about his waist and showed, their points bitten into the shrunken zone of his gaunt belly, this hidden chain of jewels that he had concealed within a belt of rag so filthy that the Spaniards had passed it by.

"'In Bideford,' he said, smiling to hear our English tongue that brought him back from madness for a space, 'there sits a whitewashed cottage above the sea. And there my aged mother, with her wrinkled hands turning the leaves of the Book and praying for her errant's homing, awaits me. I have seen her but this night, aye, and smelled the wall-flowers in the garden close. This necklace is scant recompense for all that she has suffered from my truancy; yet I do charge you, as Englishmen gentlemen, to see that she receives it if I die.

"I have but just now left him, folding his broken fingers across his breast, and in my haste to meet you I clasped the string about my neck where all may see it and, if they wish, question my ownership."

A trumpeter spoke up.

"We question not what a Drake does! These rubies are in plain view. Yet have I seen Thomas Doughty convey in secrecy and haste to his own cabin, like a thieving daw, treasures of gold and jewels. Mayhap he means to add them to the general store, but in the meantime he has hidden them."

"They were free gifts from the Dons," said Doughty, "given in exchange for courtesy shown them."

"Courtesy indeed," broke in Will Harvest, an old-time mariner with Drake. "If it be courtesy to sit closeted for hours with Spaniards, drinking their health in their own wine while an honest English seaman lay below, gasping for a swallow of stinking water that was denied him."

Doughty turned fiercely upon Harvest, who only smiled at him with a grin that betokened his readiness to take up a quarrel with something keener than words.

"This is but hearsay?" cried Doughty. "If I was closeted in private, fellow, what know ye of what passed?"

Harvest pushed forward the misshapen

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figure of Peter, who stood with his eyes twinkling malice at Doughty.

"I helped to serve them," he said simply.

"As for Spanish, *yo lo comprendo*—I understand it. The Dons style him *amigo*."

"Now, by God!" said Drake. "In this, Thomas Doughty, thou hast charged me in charging my own flesh and blood that I did set beneath thee in command, esteeming thee my friend. Friend or false friend, I hold above thee and all others on this voyage the supreme command and judgment. Get thee aboard the flag-ship. I shall have more to say with thee. As for thee, my brother, take charge of this galleon. She shall play store-ship for us. Discharge the prisoners with sufficient food in their own pinnace. Wipe out the title from the bows and rechristen her *The Good Adventure*.

Doughty's face was suffused with blood at being publicly scored before those he esteemed inferiors, and his eyes, darting at Peter, at Harvest and the trumpeter, were those of adders. He turned to Drake.

"But, Francis," he commenced.

"Francis me no Francis!" said Drake. "I am familiar only to friends. To the rail, sirrah! I shall see thee later."

Back on the *Golden Hynde* I took Angus aside.

"Thou wast right," I told him. "Doughty has tripped up at last."

"Wait," said Angus. "I am not so sure that Drake himself, in his sudden righteous indignation at this charge against his brother, has not tripped. But he is too crafty a fox not to double. See here, Trevennion—what Thomas Doughty has done is but to set aside some loot for himself, and there are few of these gentlemen adventurers who would not have done the same thing had they the chance. He will explain that all away to them, sharing it with them, belike, saying he so intended at the first.

"As for Drake's brother, Doughty will claim it serves to show his zeal in that he did not hesitate to challenge Drake's own flesh and blood when he thought he had done wrong. An I mistake not, Drake will let himself be so persuaded. For, look ye, the peril of our voyage lies ahead when we essay to follow through Magellan's strait. Not until we are in the Pacific will Drake risk open rupture upon so slight a pretext as this would prove if it came to a court-martial, with all the gallants on Doughty's side."

ONCE more Angus proved shrewd in his reasoning. For later in the day Drake and Thomas Doughty came forth arm-in-arm, and Drake announced that Doughty would take his place as commander on the *Golden Hynde* while he would shift his flag to the galleon. And this he did, taking with him his arms, his clothing in his sea-chest, his magic chart of horn and the two pictures of Elizabeth, his queen, and Bess of Bideford, his sweetheart.

Angus and I were not chosen among his slim crew. He may have left us as a leaven among Doughty's friends. I chose to think it thus. And Peter came back to us. Drake's face seemed sad to me when he went overboard, and I acted on an impulse to do something for him, little as I could. I put on Neptune's collar of state and fastened to it a short note to Drake, sending him Neptune for company and as my representative, since I could not be with him. The dog went with the boat that carried Drake's chest, and a note came back that I still cherish.

It was a kindly thought, Trevennion. I thank thee.—DRAKE.

John Doughty came back to the *Golden Hynde* and also Simon Reed. Soon the ship became the hotbed of a sneering conspiracy, a conspiracy of hints and intrigue, covered by protestations from Doughty that Drake could not be held responsible for the matters complained of. Ere long we were a divided ship. Chester, one of the lesser nobles who had joined the adventure, became Doughty's catspaw.

With him Doughty led a banter against the seamen, comparing their rough ways with the foppery of the gentles who sauntered about the decks and, encouraged by Doughty, bid the master alter sails at their whims. When the man resented the actions of the coxcombs who were beguiled by Doughty's devices, Doughty, across the cuddy table, would rail at the growing insolence of underlings in the shipmaster's own presence.

Once the master growled openly, and Doughty uncovered one spring of his own confidence.

"Sir," said the old seaman, "Magellan had a vice-admiral with others who set

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themselves against the chief authority, and they were hanged."

This was to Chester, but Doughty heard it and laughed.

"Gallows, old Crusty, are for dogs, not gentlemen!"

Then Drake sent for Angus to go aboard the galleon, and I was left with Peter to watch the subtle progress of the mutiny. For so, to me, it portended—either an uprising of the men against the gentles, or a persuasion of the jacks that Drake had brought them out to their dooms.

For Peter told me that every night John Doughty would tell the lines of some sailor's hand beneath the slush-lamp and set in his mind conviction of death by cannibals, or slavery by enchantment, or else an ending in the maws of ravenous sea-beasts.

This was the meat of it. The gallants freely styled this their voyage. To them was the honor and the glory, the riches. Drake himself was an upstart of lesser rank; the sailors were mere aids to their fame, of no more consequence than the ship's tackle. We had the best of the booty aboard the *Golden Hynde*, and Doughty ever hinted that here was enough to make rich men of all of us. I had set myself to listen, and I tried to hold an even course until I could discover an actual conspiracy.

But both the Doughtys had marked me as one not of their own kidney. Thomas Doughty set me to the task of appraising the booty in hand, and I obeyed in the line of my apparent duty. Meanwhile, as we plowed across the waste of waters, I picked up the rudiments of navigation from the old shipmaster, learning to use the astrolabe and, from a table of the sun's declinations, work out our latitudes.

And, whenever chance permitted, I joined the fencing between the nobles. Reed had been appointed master-at-arms, and, despite him, I learned more from him than he would have allowed. He was my better, but I crept up toward him by watchfulness and practise until I could hold my own 'gainst most of his sallies.

It was April when first we ran across the sea-pigs, the porpoises. As far as the eye could reach they gamboled about the little fleet, rolling and somersaulting in antics of sheer joy. This, said the master, presaged shallowing waters and landfalls. Next came drifts of seaweed and a berried branch and then a sea-vulture, or cormorant, trundling past us with great-beaked albatrosses and flocks of whirling gulls.

THEN rose the land, dark as a thunder-cloud, lying along the sea forbiddingly, a range of sullen hills, creased and crinkled into deep, black folds, with ragged forests bristling on the tops. As we drew nigh, twilight came on, and we coasted close to shore, wondering at its grim aspect. I had visioned a land of enchantment, of singing birds and flowering trees, of shining sands and crystal streams falling over cliffs of emerald verdure.

All aboard were affected by the gloomy frown of that iron coast-line, gallants and jacks alike, gazing fearfully at what seemed the fitting haunt of giants, of flesh-eating savages, of wizards who might draw us ashore in the night by mysterious spells. I venture that the whole fleet's companies were burdened with misgiving dreams that night.

But with the morning we found that friendly currents and breezes had brought us close to what now seemed to our sea-weary eyes a true Garden of Eden. From offshore came the perfume of blended spices wafted from height upon sloping height of gardens on the shoreward cliffs. Fairy heralds in the shape of a great drift of butterflies, snow-white with purple veinings and dust of gold upon the fringes of their wings, invaded us and turned the ropes to living garlands.

The trees appeared indeed to bear gems rather than fruit and blossoms; the sky was a clear jewel, unflecked with cloud; the softly murmuring sea, that surged in to cream upon beaches of gold, was deepest violet. A great bay horned about us as we neared the shore, and, above the purring of the gentle-lapping surf, we caught the drowsy sound of palm fronds, fanned in a wind that ever turned them to gleaming reflections of the sky and a hundred shades of emerald.

We anchored, but the set signals from the galleon bade all stay aboard until Drake with sixteen men went ashore to seek for water and discover the disposition of those savages who might lurk amid all that radiant beauty, resentful mayhap of our usurpation of their paradise. Neptune was in the bows and barked at me as I looked over the rail. Drake's hand was on his collar. So, till his return, we ate our hearts out for the luscious

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fruits and the firm land beneath us once again.

Our spirits mounted. The men sang as they washed their clothes and made all shipshape. Drake had proven a true leader to a fairer world. The gallants put on their court clothes and sunned themselves, murmuring only against Drake's caution, and Doughty's croakings were turned about for the moment. Yet his shrewdness and the crooked twistings of his mind used even this occasion. Little grains of doubt and discontent began to trickle out while we swung offshore.

"Have patience, my masters," Thomas Doughty said, loud enough for all to catch his words. "Drake has not gone ashore alone and left us to gaze like caged beasts at so fair a country without full reason. Too fair, i' faith, it shines for my liking. A scene painted by wizards, to my mind. I should not wonder to see it vanish like those visions of the desert that allure only to mock. Such beauty may mask a hideous skeleton. It may be all a lure of enchantment.

"Mark ye, our leader is wise in his caution. That he holds doubts of all this loveliness is plain in that he has bidden us stay aboard while he dares the perils of the unknown. Such splendor is not mortal. This close temptation makes me not forget yesterday's menace of the further hills, where even now destruction may be lurking to overwhelm us by the working of a spell.

"Now, by the saints, it changes. Said I not aright? It changes in a twinkling. We have been coaxed to our doom!"

Even as he spoke, the waving forest darkened, dulling to somber hues all the flashing, waving expanse of leaf and blossom. A moaning sound came from the land and swiftly turned into a roar before which the trees bowed and sprang back affrighted, whipped into a sudden turmoil of protest. Out to sea the blue sky was now black with swelling clouds; the violet water turned a sickly gray, and a great swell lifted all the ships until the anchor lines were taut.

Great drops fell heavily upon the decks, then ceased. Darkness sifted down. A forked javelin of lightning split the blackness, followed by a peal of thunder that sounded like a hideous outcry of tormented souls from the opened gates of hell.

Our ships plunged madly at their hawsers; the gale shrieked through the rigging, whipping away with sudden violence the flimsy fastenings of the sails and tearing loose the flapping canvas to rags that rushed to leeward like thistledown. The thunder grew to a steady shock of explosions. The dark coils of the sea were shot with flame from mingled reflections of the lightning and of flashing phosphorous.

All about us they were in a hissing turmoil so that we pitched and tossed in all directions. They seemed to snap and howl, striking at each other and falling back, foiled by their own eagerness, but ever coming on while the ship staggered and spume flew fast in a wild yeast. Water came into the waist faster than the scuppers could bear it off, and we were as a leaking pot. The billows seethed and boiled, and the roar of the wind increased till we were deafened. There were swift glimpses of the land in the fierce winkings of the lightning that showed us our faces green in its glare, our shadows thrown sharp across deck and masts, and then utter darkness and howling.

The noise sounded like the trump of doom; there was no pause to the fearful outcry. Once a bolt of fire seemed to rive the belly of a swollen cloud, and, as we gazed awefully aloft, we could see a silver burst of rain falling, swept far to sea before it could reach us. Flash and crash and then flash again, with the constant outroar as of lost souls outdone by the hideous laughter of the fiends that rode upon the gale and mocked them and us.

A hawser parted, and we swung with our bows to the sea. Doughty, his brother and Reed rushed about among the men. Some of them were kneeling on the trembling deck, others clinging to the rigging, doggedly awaiting their end.

"To sea! To sea! Away from this accursed shore!"

An eddy of the gale brought the words to me. Under the scourge of word and gesture the sailors started to obey. The gallants, their finery sodden, terror in their faces, echoed the cry:

"To sea! To sea!"

The old shipmaster sprang forward. I could not hear him, but his motions showed his dissent. Thomas Doughty made to thrust him aside, and he caught Doughty's arm. The lightning flashed, faded, and, when the next came, I saw the master rolling on the deck, his hands clutching at a dagger in his breast. The men were

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demented—certain that their end was come; that Doughty's words of witchery were true; that their only chance was to flee the treacherous shore.

The full purpose of Doughty broke upon me. The storm had given him his opportunity. To sail back home with what booty was in hand; to steal Drake's *Golden Hynde* as display of the failure of the trip; to tell how Drake had led them into such disaster—to a land where demons made enchantment. How much was born of his own cowardice I did not guess. He bore himself as one unafraid, with a mocking smile as he spurned the corse of the shipmaster.

And Drake was ashore, unmindful of the theft and the traitorous retreat, the open mutiny.

More lightning lit up the sea that was now one vast field of driving white, revealing the tortured forest and our other ships still holding. But there was no sign of a returning boat from the shore. A seaman hurried to the stern to sever the line with an ax. There was no present need to make sail, the wind would blow the *Golden Hynde* to sea-room.

The overweighted clouds had burst at last, and their contents now came down in a mighty torrent that defied the wind, beating through the blackness as if a mighty cistern had of a sudden lost its bottom. With the downpour the lightnings became less vivid, though still the thunder drummed and rolled. The rain veiled the other ships. But I caught one glimpse of the shore before I leaped to the rail and dived headlong into the water.

Buffeted in a crisscross of tumbling seas, I seemed to make no progress. The water was alive with liquid fire. I chipped off flakes at each stroke, spray in my face, heavy billows smashing at me so that for the sake of better progress I swam blindly under water between long breaths that took in as much water as air.

ONCE I clung to the riding line of a consort, I knew not which, and hung there while I gave rest to my laboring lungs and pounding heart. Then I went on struggling shoreward, mindful of but one desire, to find Drake and tell him what was happening in the blackness. We might have been a half-mile from the shore, though it seemed I labored hours before my feet struck the sloping bottom.

To the right of me the seas were bursting like cannon on a reef, but here was easy landing, and I staggered up the shore, led by lightning flashes and also by the gradual raising of the dark. Some one saw my faltering shape and hailed me. It was Drake's men awaiting his return, bowered in a grove of trees whose hand-shaped leaves played roof to them.

"Where is he?" I demanded as they looked at me wonderingly.

The light had so far come back that I could now distinguish the loom of a great cliff thrust from the foliage.

"He went to climb yon height," said Harvest. "The dog went with him. Belike they are hidden in a cave."

"He is here!" There was a scuff of eager paws, a wet muzzle thrust into my palm. Then Drake's voice clear above the pour of rain, piercing a peal of thunder: "Ha, Trevennion. Art ashore then?"

"The *Golden Hynde!*" I gasped. "Doughty has mutinied! They have killed old Bailey!"

Drake nodded in the strange twilight of returning day. His gaze held the quality of lightning itself.

"I saw them set out from the cliff," he said. "Thou camest to warn me, Trevennion? I shall not forget it. Now men, to the *Marygold*. By God, he has declared himself! So be it!"

They hesitated for an instant to put out in that boil of waters, but Drake's scornful spirit and whip words of command drove them to the boat.

Next to the *Golden Hynde* the *Marygold* was fleetest of all of our ships. The water boiled as the men bent to the oars, and soon we all tumbled aboard her. I remember Drake giving no command. We seemed to sense his vengeance and leap to the unspoken order. With a few scant inches of sail exposed on the foreyard, we tore the anchors from their hold and shot, like a bolt from a crossbow, to the open sea.

Stronger grew the light, and there were gleams as of sifted sunshine dappling the land behind us, but the seas, rebellious yet against the tempest that had scourged them, mounted in mighty rollers, gray hills that gradually turned to green as the clouds retreated and the sun came out once more. The hurricane still blew half a gale, and, bows under in the press of our pursuit, we swept on with decks awash, Drake on the

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poop like a statue, unmoving, relentless.

An hour passed before we sighted the *Golden Hynde*. She was aback, her fore-rigging in a tangle, her mast stumped, a distress signal flying at half-mast. I knew well that Doughty had never set it there. The crew must have rallied with the shifting of the gale, knowing it as something they had met before and conquered. But now the shipmaster lay dead. There was no skill aboard to offset their peril—or, if there were, the possessors would not exercise it. The flag was a token of willing surrender, of returning fealty, as well as a cry for help.

We had set almost full sail, the wind aft. The gunners were at stations, silent beside their shotted guns. No word was spoken, from Drake to powder-boys, as we hauled up into the wind and lay there rocking in mute, armed reproach. Drake ordered away a boat and, as he left the poop, beckoned to me to follow. The *Golden Hynde*, like a wounded sea-bird, squatted on the surge, and I saw Drake's brows contract as he looked at the spoiled trimness of her.

Still wordless, as he and I gained the decks where the mutineers stood with dropped chins and eyes that showed above semicircles of white like those of a fearful dog toward an angry master, Drake sent the boat back to the *Marygold*. We mounted to the poop where Doughty and his brother stood, biting their lips and looking furtively at the stern, speechless figure of the man they had sought to betray.

Drake made as if he did not see them but advanced to the break of the poop and gave crisp orders to restore the wreck, in a voice that the repentant sailors jumped to as if a god had spoken. Almost by magic, it seemed, order came back from wreckage; the *Golden Hynde*, close-hauled, followed the *Marygold* and passed her, lunging toward the land that now shone sparkling like a myriad-sided jewel beneath the smiling sun.

Still Drake spoke no word to the Doughtys nor looked at them. From the poop he called out four men by name.

"Harvest! Clifford! Thomson! Vance!"

As the four burly fellows out of his boat's crew came up the ladder from the quarter-deck, Drake wheeled and pointed to Thomas Doughty. His voice was like a cold wind that seens to penetrate the flesh and blight the very spirit.

"Rope me this fellow to a mast until such time as I decide his fate."

Doughty gasped as if the skies had fallen. The last thing he had dreamed of from Drake was such indignity.

"Nay, Francis," he protested. "Forget not that I am a gentleman!"

Drake looked him in the eyes and nodded to the men. Doughty fought vainly in their grip, and, as they lifted him from the deck, he spat all his venom.

"Unhand me, fools!" he cried. "Fore God, ye all shall smart for this! High to low! I have done naught without warrant! Lord Burleigh stands behind me! Let me down, I say!"

Frogged he was, between the four of them, arms and legs jerking, his head upcrooked toward Drake while he shot out his hate, foam on his lips. And, as he read that Drake knew all the truth—that Doughty had shipped as Burleigh's spy and tool; that all his honeyed words and courtesies, his protestations and pledged faith had been a mockery—the man quit struggling and grew passive, his face blanched, his eyes holding fear.

When we reached the anchorage, Drake summoned old Tom Moone and ordered from the galleon the larger guns and stores, bidding them set fire to her when his work was done.

"These two men I give into thy charge, Moone," he said. "Keep them aboard the *Christopher*. The rest," he turned and looked along the deck of the *Golden Hynde*, "were but misled, as I myself have been. For the future we shall all be the more careful."

I saw the scarlet face of Reed trying to conceal a sneer that was made half of relief and half surprize that he had not been bound and delivered with the Doughtys. It was his lack of rank that saved him.

"Unbind them," said Drake. "Moone, I hold thee responsible until they come to judgment."

The ropes were cast off, but, before Moone could lay his heavy hand upon Thomas Doughty's shoulder, the latter with the litheness of a leopard snatched from Moone's belt a pistol and fired it point-blank at Drake. The next second a dozen swords were flashed to pierce him through, as Moone upswung him from the planks and made to cast him overboard. I leaped to Drake's side as he staggered, one hand on his chest. He was wearing no corselet, and I looked to see the bright blood spread

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between his fingers as I supported him; but he stood erect from my hold, coughed, took away his hand and fumbled in his doublet.

"When we return, Trevennion," he said, "canst thank thy Uncle Zadik for his amulet. Truly it has saved my life this day, though I warrant a bruise back of it."

As he drew out the gold triangle with the mystic graving, the spent bullet of the assassin fell to the deck and rolled down its slope where a boy retrieved it in the scupper. The charm was dented with the force of the charge that else must have driven the bullet home to Drake's heart. Drake took the bullet from the lad and handed it to me.

"Give this to Zadik as a visible token of his craft," he said.

"Put that man down, Moone."

Then, for the first time since his arrest, he spoke to Doughty.

"Not even for this will I sit in hasty judgment on thee," he said. "Put them aboard the *Christopher*."

The guilty brothers, deeming themselves dead men by some slow torture yet to be devised, false themselves and so doubting Drake's fair justice, refused to go.

"Truss them and sling them aboard," Drake ordered briefly.

And in such wise, the seamen making of it no gentle play, the Doughtys were hauled aboard the *Christopher*.

Fresh store of water and of fruits was put aboard, and nightfall saw us plunging to the south. From the pooprail, I watched the crimson blazing of the abandoned galleon until it waned to a flickering star and at last sank beneath the horizon.

CHAPTER IX

THE TRIBUNAL

NOW were we fairly bound at last toward the realm that rumor peopled with giants and demons—where the mighty currents swung that would bear us down cataracts of hissing seas between burning cliffs into the jaws of hell. We were fairly upon Magellan's trail, the path from which he had never turned. And, though the Doughtys were close confined, there was not wanting evidence to give the warnings of John Doughty shape within our minds.

Many a midnight saw us sliding through seas that quivered with lambent flame, like witches' oils, while sea-snakes of red and blue and green writhed through the phosphorous. Blue corpse-lights danced upon the trucks and yard-ends, and from the shore came weird bellowings of monsters. The fins of great fishes would cleave the thick water, leaving a trail of fire. Times we would drift through masses of foul weed where live things crawled and strange sucking noises issued.

The sparkling dawn would show us bestial things upon the beaches, roaring at us and gnashing with white tusks. We saw smoking mountains, and we passed leagues of desolate shore. Such sights raised doubts within all stout hearts but Drake's, I think. He alone was unmoved, and ever his face was firm as in the *Golden Hynde* we led the way.

Once indeed I felt convinced that we were in the grip of evil forces. The sea slowly mounted until the helmsmen shuddered as they cast fearful eyes at the green hills that rose behind them, driving us far from land for four days, out of company, leaving us at the end with sprung timbers and all hands laboring at the spouting pumps. Worse, the *Swan*, with Thomas Drake, was missing. And ever the shores grew wilder, wildernesses of fire-scorched, barren rocks where no green thing showed, and the high leaping surf boomed like broadsides of demi-cannon.

Back of all reared desolate mountains, cloud-topped, snow-crested, showing sharp jagged peaks spearing banners of mist, the coast of Patagonia. Giants lived there, clad in cloaks of long feathers, bringing us the hams of great birds called "ostrigges." There were islands white with gulls that seemed at sight of us to burst apart into a mad medley of whirring, beating wings and harsh cries.

One day we sailed into a long-flanked estuary with an isle in the midst of it. This was Port Julian, and beneath the lee of the isle we found harborage. All hands were summoned aboard the *Golden Hynde* to be present at the court martial of the Doughtys the next morning.

Sir William Wynter was placed at the head of the jury. The rest were drawn by lots from a tub placed in the waist of the galleon. On the quarter-deck were grouped the commanders and navigators, the higher officers. In the waist stood the sailors and

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those of lesser degree, upstaring to the higher platform. One by one the chosen men took their places on a settle brought from the cabin. Seven were of the Doughtys' own class, five were seamen, bronzed, burly, awkward in the fine company.

And from the first there was division. On the settle the gentles drew apart from the rough jacks and placed their scented cambrics before their noses as if fearing contamination. Below there were two groups, one of gallants, resplendent in their best raiment, haughty in demeanor, looking askance and whispering among each other at the sailors, bare-armed, scantily clothed in coarse canvas and stained cloth, rings in their ears, bright kerchiefs on their heads. Under Angus was the armed guard to keep order.

The day was very still and very silent. Every word could be plainly heard. Back of the jury rose the scrolled carvings of the poop, giving the scene a fitting dignity. Above a few startled birds wheeled, squawking indignant cries at this disturbance of their ocean-bound solitude.

The Doughtys were brought out, defiant, confident. They exchanged nods with their friends, and Thomas Doughty essayed a jest that fell flat, since no one capped it. The door of the main cabin opened, and Drake came forth, slowly descending the carven stairway to the quarter-deck, his face immutable, with authority stamped upon it. He did not look at either of the prisoners; he looked at no one, advancing slowly till he stood between the charged men and the jury in a little open space.

The ship's bell struck seven clanging notes that somehow solemnized the occasion. Then, nothing but the shrilling of the wheeling birds and the *lap-lap* of the tide along the sides of the ship.

"With what are these men charged?" asked Wynter.

"John Doughty, naught but the passing of foolish, idle tales," said Drake in measured voice and tone. "That and being misled by his brother, in which, and it be a crime, I and many others stand also charged. Doughty has set up for a prophet. Time will prove him but a croaking raven with one silly cry of portent. I have burned his books. Set him free!"

The bonds were cast off, and John Doughty, his cheeks fiery with Drake's scornful words, stepped aside into a group of gallants who opened to admit him but said nothing, bending their gaze upon the principal prisoner.

"And this man?" asked Wynter.

"With treason and with mutiny, with murder and attempted murder!"

A chill seemed to come into the sunny air with the pregnant words. Thomas Doughty raised his head but made no other motion.

"Am I not, as a gentleman, to be tried by my peers?" he asked.

"These are thy peers," answered Drake without looking on him.

Doughty laughed, a little, scornful laugh.

"I would pass seven or eight of them, belike," he said. "But I call no ignorant, dirty seaman peer of mine."

The sailors bore the taunt quietly, but there were murmurs of approval from the gentlemen adventurers and a rustling of stiff silken doublets.

"If any seek to sway this jury by a manifest of like or hate for or against this prisoner," said Drake in a swift, biting voice, "him will I clap in irons! Master-at-arms, attend my words!"

Then, for the first time, he turned to Doughty.

"We be all peers aboard these ships, Master Doughty," he said. "Peers until we are adjudged unfitting to belong to this gallant company."

"All peers? Including thyself?"

There was no mistaking the sneer. But Drake did not move nor change his steady regard.

"Thy peer, Doughty. Once thy friend! 'Tis true I do not count myself as thine equal in all things. A truce to bickering! Dost thou defend thyself, or wilt thou choose a pleader?"

Doughty elected to plead his cause and did so to such advantage that the charge of treason was set aside as not proven.

"Show me," he said, "thy royal warrant for this voyage—show me wherein her Majesty doth openly appear as our patron, and then talk of treason."

And Drake, who held no warrant and dared not break his oath to the queen that she should not be known as having ventured her crowns, was forced to let the matter pass. Next came the question of attempted murder, and Drake produced his witness, myself, the boy who picked up the bullet, Moone and the rest. There was much

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bitter wrangling and attempts to make us foreswear our words. For the charge Doughty found ingenious excuse.

"The charge of treason has been dismissed as paltry," he said. "The charge of mutiny is not yet fastened upon me. I did act in the best interests of my ship, my crew, this expedition, according to my lights. And in the execution of that duty violent hands were laid upon me by rude sailors. I did but defend myself against one who offered me indignities and did himself refuse to hold speech with me, as I shall prove by Drake's own witnesses."

Cleverly, craftily, he made it appear as if Drake was stubborn, domineering, resolved to disgrace Doughty at the first chance because he was jealous of Doughty's popularity with the gentlemen volunteers. Drake, he claimed, had ever leaned toward his sailors and found cause to slight the gentlemen. It was skilfully done, and Drake's brows darkened with the restraint of his temper. But the murder of the shipmaster Bailey was brought up, a matter that, if proven, could not be lightly put away. And again Doughty showed himself a skilful questioner.

I MYSELF had only seen the shipmaster interfere with Doughty's giving of orders and then rolling on the deck in the next lightning flare. I had seen no hand actually give the blow.

"And then, Master Trevennion?" asked Doughty. "Then didst thou desert the ship?"

I felt the red blood mount to my face as I knew by the smiles of all the gallants that he had scored. But I countered hotly.

"If it be desertion to leave a ship whose commander basely breaks away from the rest of the fleet in mutiny to the orders of the admiral, yes."

"Ah!" said Doughty with a smile. "Yet that is not so shown. Perchance it was thou who mutinied."

No apparent witness could be found who saw the blow struck, and Doughty's smile grew more constant. Thus far he had made himself out, in the eyes of the gallants at least, an injured man overset by Drake; and I saw clearly the wisdom of Angus when he had said that it would be hard to find Doughty guilty by court martial. After many had been questioned, there was a pause.

"Is that all?" asked Doughty with a sneer.

Drake's face suddenly flamed, and his eyes showed like blue lightning.

"No," he thundered, "it is not!" From the inside of his doublet he of a sudden plucked a dagger and strode toward Doughty, who did not shrink but stood with his gums bared and his lips drawn tightly back.

"Is this thy dagger?" demanded Drake.

I had looked to see him stab Doughty with it in his wrath, but, instead, he held the weapon up before the prisoner's eyes, the bright sun throwing out a spray of rainbow light from the gems in the handle, the blade itself seeming dulled or rusty. Doughty drew a great breath that made his chest heave like a lifting wave, but he gave no ground. When he spoke, the words came with a hoarse hissing as if his throat were dry.

"It is thine own!" he answered. "I saw thee wearing it the day we left Plymouth."

Drake's figure, with that strange faculty that it seemed to possess in stressful moments, dilated until it appeared to tower above the taller person of Doughty, his face showing an ineffable contempt.

"Doughty, thou liest to save thy miserable life," he said, while we hung upon these his words. "This was my dagger even as this—" he took another from his girdle—"was thine. The night after we took our first Spaniard, we made exchange of our daggers at thy suggestion, pledging each other fealty, swearing united devotion to the cause of this quest to which thou didst subscribe in a burning eloquence. So thou saidst, 'we place our honor in each other's hands, and, if I prove false to thee and to this enterprise, my heart shall gladly be the sheath of mine own poniard!'

"Doughty, thou art a liar and a renegade, false to thyself and me and all this company, a foresworn recreant and a murderer! Upon this blade, once fair and bright as thy boasted fellowship to me, lies the red rust of Bailey, who has served me—and before me Sir John Hawkins—for many years, a simple man, bearing no coat-of-arms, no crest, and with but one word to his motto —'Duty.'"

With loathing he turned sharply on his heel from Doughty, who was licking dry lips in a livid face.

"Peter!" commanded Drake sharply.

Peter came forward, his long arms aswing.

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For the time I had forgotten that I had left Peter behind me when I plunged from the bulwark of the *Golden Hynde*.

"Dost know this dagger?"

"Aye."

"When didst first see it?"

"In your hand when you were carving meat."

"And next?"

"In Thomas Doughty's fingers as ye were breaking fast the next morn after we took the Spanish galleon."

"And last?"

"In the bosom of Bailey. The corse rolled into the scuppers with none to tend it, and I, having some skill as leech and loving the man, did look to see if there were some sign of life. But his heart was cloven; so I took the dagger and hid it in my bosom."

"Why?"

"Trevennion was gone! I could not follow him, having neither stomach nor skill to swim in such a sea. Therefore I hid it, since it would have been a folly to return it to the owner. I had no fancy for mine own body, such as it is, being made a cushion for it, as a lasting hint to keep mine eyes closed and my tongue silent."

"So! That is all."

Peter retreated.

Drake advanced the poniard, holding it by the point to within a few inches of Doughty's face.

"Doughty," he said. "We fighters often lack priest and blessed crucifix in our last moments, but a dagger, or a sword-hilt, is fashioned in the shape of the cross, and so, at our last gasps, 'tis often used. Now, in the name of Him who was stretched upon such a device for all our sins, I challenge thee to kiss this weapon and to swear thy hand did not drive it into the heart of my shipmaster and old comrade. Master Fletcher, I prithee take this dagger and hallow it. In thy hands 'twill be the emblem of our blessed Christ. So offer it to Doughty."

Fletcher, his jovial face grave, stepped forward with a dignified authority and took the blade.

"*In nomine Patris, Filii et Spiritus Sancti*," he intoned, "I do now style this dagger as emblem of that cross on which Christ died. And, by His blessed wounds, by His resurrection, by His ascension to where He sits beside the awful Seat of Judgment, I conjure thee, Thomas Doughty, to kiss this cross and swear that thou art innocent!"

I thought the man would do it. Sweat dripped from him as he thrice essayed to moisten his lips and perform the act that would clear him. His life hung on this. He knew it; we all knew it. Back of the dagger, firm in the chaplain's hand, showed the stern countenance of Fletcher, God's minister, his eyes holding Doughty's with the divinity of his consecration.

Doughty's neck seemed stiffened beyond control. His eyeballs protruded slightly; the veins in temples and throat swelled into blue ropes, as did the sinews of his neck. He glared at the dagger as the drops ran down his face, gray beneath his sunbrown, staring at the rust that was the blood of Bailey.

His breath came in a harsh whistling sound. At last it found words as he struck savagely at the dagger, striking it from Fletcher's grip to the deck, where it struck and stuck slanting in the planks, throwing back of it, dark on the sand-whitened boards, the shadow of a cross.

"Is this the Inquisition? Am I, an Englishman, to be so tested with such mummery? I say now that none of ye are my peers and none have jurisdiction over me. For I hold warrant for all my deeds and shall answer for them only to him who sent me here. To William Cecil, Lord Burleigh, none other. I hold his own handwrite stamped with his own seal."

"Thou didst," said Drake. "I hold it now, found in thy chest, a warrant of thy treachery."

But Doughty would not be stilled. His face was convulsed with hate, and flecks of foam flew from his lips as he shrilled,

"Ye do not dare—I say ye do not dare to lay hands upon me. For Burleigh is higher in power than any commander-errant of a flimsy fleet, a favor-currier to a woman's whims, a panderer to his own greed under the name of glory! The wisdom and policies of hard Burleigh are like to thine as the sun is to a candle! Set thyself against him, and thou shalt be crushed—aye, broken on the wheel! And I, his emissary, foresworn by the lies of an underling, a misshapen hunchback whose twisted form proclaims his crooked mind."

"Thou dost forget, Doughty," broke in Drake, "that thy patron, Burleigh, is a

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hunchback, too. Enough. Thou hast sealed thine own fate. Take him away. I leave judgment to the jury."

As Doughty was taken off, Drake ascended to the upper deck and disappeared into his own cabin, lest his presence might be said to sway the jury. Only when they had put their heads together and whispered on the cleared quarter-deck for an hour, did Wynter send for him and for the prisoner. And Wynter gave the verdict.

"We find the prisoner guilty, as charged, of murder and of mutiny."

Drake nodded.

"I would not sentence thee in haste, Doughty," he said. "Yet make thy peace tonight, for on the morrow I shall decide thy fate."

"Thou canst not hang me. I am a gentleman."

"I shall not hang thee, Doughty. Yet make thy peace. Master Fletcher shall attend thee."

"I would burn in hell for thrice a million years before I would fawn upon a priest to make my favors," answered Doughty.

And Angus led him back into the lazaretto.

There was little discussion of the trial. All rowed back in the quiet evening to their ships speaking in whispers.

Under the stars we could see Drake pacing the poop alone, up and down, up and down, far into the night. And at dawn the striding figure was still there.

"He is hard set to it," said Angus. "He can not forget that Doughty was his friend. And, in the treachery of that amity, he fears he may be too harsh. I know him. If he has a fault, a touch of madness that all great men have, it is a passion for a too nice balance of justice. It is not that he fears Burleigh as some seem to think, nor that he fears a mutiny. If Doughty dies, thou wilt see a rigorous discipline maintained from now forth."

"What else would he do?" I queried.

"Maroon him. Send him in chains back to England in the next prize we take, together with those who seem to favor him. He may send back the *Marygold*. I know not. It is likely that he will put the sentence to a vote."

The pacing figure stopped its walk. In the crystal dawn light we could see his face was wan and seamed with lines of vigil and of mental anguish.

"I go ashore to the isle," he said. "See to it that all holding office follow me anon."

CHAPTER X

WHO KNOWS?

ASHORE we followed Drake, who strode the shingle with bent head, going along the marge where the boom of the eternal sea, the steady swish of the pebbles and the sharp cries of the birds furnished the only sound above the crunching of the shells and pebbles beneath our feet. That our leader was sore beset in spirit was most evident. The deep lines were hard creases in his face. Thirty paces ahead of us he reached a craggy spit that barred the beach, stopped, swiftly turned to us and beckoned. We hurried to join him, looking where his outstretched arm pointed.

Black against a sky that held the sheen of pearl was a gaunt gibbet, and on it, bird-cleaned, wind-bleached, swung the ghastly relic of a man.

"Magellan's mutineers!" said Drake. "And one yet swings above the scattered bones of his fellows. All night I have sought a sign to tell me my duty. Here on this savage, lonely rock it beckons and speaks from that grinning skull. A finger-post of death!"

His voice was solemn, and, as we made a crescent about him, gazing at the death's head that seemed to gibber at us, his words seemed spoken within our souls rather than through our ears. As he paused, we heard again the long drum-roll of the surf.

"Men," said Drake, and there was keen agony in his voice, "give me your judgment. Oh, doubt not that I loved Doughty. He was as my spirit's twin. For that he sought my life, I forgive him. But this quest of ours, for all of Burleigh's policies, is set far above ourselves. I tell you we hold the honor of England in our hands. Are we deemed weak—then is the time to strike.

"We are but lately delivered from the persecutions of the Inquisition. Shall we lapse back to slavery and fear? Shall we see our best and bravest stretched upon the rack or tortured by the flames of the *auto de fé*. Hear ye that surf? I say to you that the groans of our fellow countrymen, could they be joined and heard through their dungeon walls, would outtop the waves as

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thunder sounds above the roaring of the tempest.

"We have thrown down the gage to Philip. Shall we tamely pick it up again? I will tell you now that, if our quest be fruitful, Gloriana herself, whose knights we are, has pledged me her royal word that she will set behind us all the might of England's ships and men to put proud Philip in his place once and forever.

"Doughty, I say, has conspired against this doing, and not all the Burleighs in the land shall stay my hand to achieve it. Give me your judgment, gentlemen all. Is it life—or death? If death, raise your arms in silence."

Once more we heard the chanting of the seas. It seemed a requiem. Who first stirred, I know not, but one arm was tossed aloft, and in a trice all of us did likewise. So we wheeled and rowed back to the ships in silence.

Doughty was brought. He stood bravely, but I saw the sweat of apprehension beaded on his brow.

"Thomas Doughty, thou art offered choice of being left upon this isle in life or in death. So choose."

Lord Leicester's secretary was no craven. He drew himself up and answered lightly.

"Life on yonder thirsty isle were worse than death, being but death prolonged. So let me go out by the sharp, swift edge of the sword. And this I crave, that, by the love thou once didst bear me, thou wilt thyself despatch me."

And Drake, speaking slowly in an even voice, answered him.

"So be it."

"Then," said Doughty gaily, throwing off all his gravity, "seeing life is for me so short a span, let be merry till I die. Let us hold a feast here on this isle before I go where there is no more feasting. For it is not fit that a gentleman of England should go mournful to his fate, nor should it be part of his sentence that his judges, having sentenced him, should deny him a cheerful sending. So shall we show no malice betwixt us all since I pay penalty at the end."

It was a strange feasting. But tables were sent ashore and viands carried. At Drake's word all wore their richest raiment. There on that sea-girt place the wheeling birds stared with black, beady eyes upon a band arrayed in shining silks, slashed with gold and silver, decked with golden chains and collars where jewels sparkled, broidered with rare laces, the boards draped with damask and silks from our prizes, goblets of silver-gilt adrip with malmsey, a strange company upon a strange occasion.

Unseen beyond a rocky slope swung the skeleton on Magellan's gallows, yet Death himself was at the feast, agrin at all the gallant quips and compliments that passed, Doughty outbraving all the rest with apt conceits. He had donned the attire that I had first seen him wear aboard the *Golden Hynde*, his murrey-colored doublet of Genoa, puffed with *ciprus*, his gemmed collar in lieu of ruff.

"For," said he, "with me ruffs are out of fashion."

Significant it was that none wore weapons, save only Drake, who wore his great two-handed battle-sword. But Chaplain Fletcher had brought his vessels and hallowed bread and wine for the last holy sacrament.

Slowly sank the sun, gilding the torn rocks and the slow-heaving sea. Then Doughty rose and, taking up a gittern, sat himself upon the saddle of a rock, his gallant figure and bold profile sharp against the sunset.

"One song," he said, "for it has but just now born itself and need not die with me. Then, Fletcher, your last kindly offices."

Our very pulses seemed to stop as his high, clear voice rang out. Whatever his crimes, Doughty gave us at the end the memory of a very courtly, fearless gentleman.

"What lies beyond? Who knows?
Then why fear the unknown?
The zephyr tells not whence it blows;
So may my soul be blown.

From whence it comes, or where it goes,
Spirit or wind, who knows? Who knows?

So Death, or be thou fiend or friend,
I would not lift my hand to fend
Thy sudden summons. Like the wind,
It may be cruel, may be kind.

I go before, I soon shall read
The fateful secret. Where I lead,
You all must follow. So I close.
Is it an ending? Say, who knows?

A cup! A stirrup-cup I pledge
Before I ride beyond the edge
Upon Death's pillion. Time shows
My day is done. Perhaps? Who knows?"

He stood up, dark to the sunset, his gittern set down, a goblet in his hand. It was

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a gemmed cup, and from it and the collar about his neck shot glistering rays. He drained the wine and sent the cup spinning high into the air, blazing as it turned and twisted, falling with a soft thud upon a sandy hollow and rolling down to our feet. Doughty took off his collar, turned down his doublet about his neck and advanced.

"Francis," he said, "it will not ill become thee to accept this collar. And now, since thou art to sever the last link between life and death—or is it death and life, who knows?—share with me the sacrament."

This they did and kissed each other on the cheek. Doughty knelt and slightly bowed his neck, Drake standing erect, his sword naked, stained with the ominous crimson of the sunset. As the sun dipped, Drake whirled up the heavy blade; its tip caught one last angling ray and swooped down—once—and once only.

Old Tom Moone stooped and held up the head by its long dark hair, spouting a torrent.

"So perish all traitors," he roared. And with him again we all shouted—

"So perish all traitors to God and England!"

"Leave me," said Drake, lifting a somber face. "Leave me with my dead. I will call when I need a boat."

NOT until dawn did Drake's hail sound. Swiftly we rowed to the isle in the glory of a sunrise that was all rose and pearl above the sapphire waves. The air was like wine, keen with salt of the sea and strange, sweet odors from the arms of the strait as we sailed out rejoicing from that place of death. The world seemed to have fresh-dipped, so fair and smiling was its face. The nightmare of treason and its doom seemed swept away, and on Drake's face shone a light not all reflected from the morn—the shining of high purpose firmly sealed.

We were to know its import. At noon, clear of the land, we rocked upon a glassy sea with little wind, and all, save those who worked ship, were summoned aboard the *Golden Hynde*. They packed the decks like herrings in a barrel, their wondering eyes uprolled to the break of the high poop where Drake spoke to them.

"This is the last time I shall so address you," he began. "For now, unless you join with me, our ways shall lay apart. I, without divine right, have sat in judgment and with my own good hands carried out the sentence. I have killed a traitor and murdered a friend with one stroke. 'Tis done, and there must be an end of it. Henceforth my heart is hardened. I am through with friendship till our purpose be achieved. As I have judged, so will I judge—and on me be the burden.

"We are now upon the threshold of the strait that leads us to the Pacific, which, please God and Our Lady, we shall soon give cause to change its name. I give you all your opportunity to come on my terms or turn back to England. Leave me but one ship, my *Golden Hynde*, give me five good men and true—nay; but one, to waken while I sleep—and I will prove my judgment of last night against the world in arms. And I swear, upon the butchered body of him who was both my friend and enemy, that, if any swerve from the true path of duty, he shall join Doughty.

"But," and now his voice rang like a trumpet, and his eyes seemed by some strange faculty to look straight into the eyes of each of us, "I am the leader. Otherwise your equal as, by the Sacrament, all of you are henceforth equal. I'll have no jealousies. The gentlemen shall pull and haul with the jacks until their hands are as hard and able. I'll have no more captains.

"None, I say! Not even thou, my Lord Wynter! I'll have naught but seamen, obedient to me alone. No priestcraft either, Master Fletcher. Let God's judgments light on me. Thou hast oft forgot, it seems to me, with all thy talk of judgment when the wind sits wrong or aught goes awry, that thou art God's minister and not his oracle. And, by His wounds, I tell thee now I will not brook authority, save as it be vouchsafed unto mine own spirit.

"Last night I saw a vision, and I found a peace. I saw the true splendor of our swords. I saw the little isle of England swell and grow into a mighty empire o'er whose realms the sun shone ever, never setting as the wide world rolled. And 'neath her flag, the red cross of Saint George, I saw triumphant armies that had conquered hate and kept the peace 'gainst all envious enemies of love. Little worth am I to lead, but lead this vanguard of that host I will, if I march forth alone! What say ye? Speak!"

The spirit of the man spread like a mantle over all of us. As one we flung up our

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hands and shouted in his honor. And, as if our cry had broken through a spell, a wind sprang up; the sails were broken out until the pressure of it bore us down, and so, like swans, we swam on southward, the *Golden Hynde* marking a foam-bellied trail for all the rest. Drake himself was at the helm, a look of exaltation lasting on his face so that the seamen gazed at him with awe and I fancied that thus must have looked the face of Galahad of King Arthur's table when before his eyes floated the vision of the Holy Grail.

CHAPTER XI

THE *CACAFUEGO*

WE REACHED the Cape of a Thousand Virgins just eight months and a week after the day we sailed from Plymouth. Rounding it, we saw the jaws of the Magellan strait, and, with long pennons sweeping the decks in the light wind, with song and music, with glad shouts and bombards barking at the great cliffs that sloped up to mountains tipped with everlasting snow, we entered at last the maw of the famous water-passage to Cathay.

There had come no sight of the *Swan* and Drake's last remaining brother, but Drake showed no signs of sorrow, save that the lines held in his face. Stern, inflexible, holding all the crews firm within an iron grip, he piloted our course amid the winding channels, across balking currents, ever toward the westering sun, turning and twisting amid a myriad islands, feeling our way with the lead and ever finding it.

It was no pleasure journey. Fierce sudden winds sprang up, rushing in sharp sallies from where they lay ambushed in dark defiles. At night there came wailings from the shores, some born of the wind and some, who knows, of spirits condemned to dwell in this abomination of desolation. Flames shone ruddy on the heights, and more than once we glimpsed wild figures leaping about a fire, stopping their cannibal orgy to gaze down upon our riding-lights far beneath them. Fourteen days we pushed on down this alley of wind and sea until we saw the westward gates, curving up from the tide like the sides of a goblet filled with purple wine of sunset.

Came Cape Desiderato, and once more we raised a great shout There, sharp against the evening, towered a cross, reared by Magellan for a sign, as he thought, to the ships that followed him but, instead, were even then speeding recreantly back to Spain. But to us it showed as a mighty symbol of hope and of faith renewed.

Beyond shone the golden Pacific, league upon league of sea glittering in golden promise to the rolling orb that greeted us and sank behind the rim.

Northward we turned gleefully, and the winds that had fought us in the strait brought up reserves and allies and smote us till we turned and, under bare, straining poles, fled blindly south, driven like withered leaves through roaring deserts; fearing each hour to be hurled high and dry upon the shores of the great Continent Australis but powerless to prevent it.

The little *Christopher* was pounded apart, and but a remnant of her crew reached us and were hauled aboard; the rest of her boats were cracked like walnut shells, and the men swallowed up in the raging sea. Only old Tom Moone brought his shallop safely to the *Golden Hynde*. Next, before our eyes, the *Marygold* foundered, battling to the last, her masts stumpage, her tackle splayed over her like seaweed on a rock. One vast sea we saw rise behind her as she wallowed, fall and crash her down in a mad, stamping fury as wild stallions trample on a fallen wolf.

We lost our own foremast as we were flung across that wild, white waste, our hands raw with the pumps, with clearance of gear and wild clinging to ropes in the tumult of the seas, our eyes bloody from stinging brine, gaps torn in our rails, through which one cannon plunged, all the gilding and color of our poop washed away in the buffeting.

If we fed, I do not recollect it in that nightmare. Hour after hour, lashed to his post, Drake, half-blinded, half-stunned by the battery of waves that ever charged the poop and swept it, kept our bows head-on to the thundering seas, a smile stamped on his face, disdaining death, rejoicing at so fierce an enemy. Once he spoke jestingly.

"One thing at least we have done. We have wiped this Continent Australis from off Magellan's chart."

After two weeks of harass the rage of the gale burst its own cheeks. The seas subsided slowly, like the bosom of a passionate woman, and left us in an ocean wilderness.

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Alone! Clear to the inky rim of the vast circle welled the waves, ringing us in without sight of land or any vestige of our companions.

Drake hoped that the *Elizabeth* had turned back and preceded us as, with a favoring south wind bearing us along, we turned north once more, repairing our damages both to the gallant *Golden Hynde* and to our own sore bodies, short of water, our provisions moldy, the water low and stinking in the butts, our very powder dampened so that we feared for its speedy combustion.

"There is more to be had for the fighting," said Drake. "We'll trade for it with steel, eh, Moone, old sea-dog?"

The spirits of our commander grew more compelling, more cheerful as our bowsprit pointed to the trail he coveted. It was joy to me that Moone was with us, joy that the Doughtys no longer blighted us, that Angus and Gilbert of the scar were along.

The latter was a gallant gentleman who had adventured the remnants of his fortune in the dice-box of the *Golden Hynde's* brave hull. I fenced with him almost daily until he laughingly said that I was the better, for some inherited and special aptness, I fancy. I could hold my own in a bout with Angus without disgrace, and Simon Reed, I thought, put out his best to check me.

We were not quite out of all our troubles. At the Isle of Mucho, trafficking for water and food, the natives ambushed the shore-boat, and our men, with Drake, came scurrying aboard under a hail of arrows from which not one escaped. Even the gunwales and thwarts were stuck with them like a porcupine. Neptune had an ear frayed by a slanting shaft.

The whisper of poison ran round the ship, paling the faces of all these hardy mariners who would laugh at a gaping wound that let out their life honestly, as Drake had it. But to die blotched and swollen, tortured and athirst with jaws locked by the venom, was not to their mind. Peter and I, as the only leeches, did our best with fomentations, and poultices, and the wounds healed at last.

And now all misfortune left us. We frolicked up the long coast where the mighty mountains rose, silvered with snow, back of jungled forests where the flowers made great vivid splashes of color and birds flew like splintered rainbows. In those heights lay the mines of the Indians, rich in gems and precious metals. The Dons had wrung out the spoil from their wretched slaves, and it seemed a righteous and most fitting thing in all ways to cheat the Spaniards of their ill-gotten booty.

We were a rollicking band of pirates heading up to Valparaiso, where we hoped against hope to find Wynter and the *Elizabeth*, not knowing that the vice-admiral had hung about in Magellan strait, refuging from the gale, and now was on his way home with news of disaster to the venture.

The Indians were friendly. One we picked up at sea in his pirogue and set his eyes agog at the marvels of the *Golden Hynde*, giving him gifts that sent him ashore to advise his tribe of our good-fellowship and brought him back with more gifts, to pilot us to Valparaiso.

There we found a galleon, styled *The Grand Captain of the South*, laden deep with Chili wine, with much fine gold and a great crucifix of the yellow ore bossed with emeralds. Her sailors never dreamed an English ship dared venture on this sea and welcomed us with a rouse of drums and a bid to come aboard. Board her we did, to their dismay, and, after we had transferred her cargo, lay for three days ashore, feasting on fruits and fresh meats to our stomachs' content.

It was a rare picnic, and we acted more like schoolboys on a holiday than seafarers raiding a land and sea beset with eager enemies. At Tarapaca our landing boat surprized a Don asleep in the drowsy noon beside a stack of thirteen silver bars. Him Drake awakened, thanking him for his tribute with a low bow that trailed the plumes of our commander's hat in the grass. And, before the silver was in the boat, a train of long-legged sheep called llamas came solemnly two by two along the quay, all treasure-laden for our hands.

AT ARICA there was no news of Wynter, but we took two barks and eight hundred pounds of silver. And here we got wind of rare treasure. No less than sixteen thousand pounds of silver, it was said, with much gold and other valuables had sailed in the *Cacafuego*—or, to style it in English, the *Spitfire*—off to Panama on its way to Spain.

"She will have to spit fire to some purpose if we catch sight of her," laughed

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Drake. "A gold chain to him who first sights her topsails!"

So began the merry chase after the treasure-ship from port to port.

At Callao we played a rare trick, entering the harbor, guided by its course signals, at dead of night, drifting like a shadow to a mooring among the shipping. Then from the tide a sleepy custom's officer boarded us and gaped to see British seamen stand with lighted matches, bare-armed by our guns. Over he tumbled in a panic to his boat, yelling: *"El Draque! El Draque!"*

His jerkin he left in my hands as I clutched at him. Lights sprang up, and lanterns bobbed furiously as confused orders were yelled from ship to ship; and from ship to ship we went a-looting till the water crept in between the thole-pins, so crammed were we with booty.

So we slipped our mooring and slid out to sea, leaving the Dons firing at each other, cursing and calling that an English fleet was among them.

Rare fun it was and no whit lessened by the knowledge that the whole coast was up in arms and that word had gone on ahead that the Dragon was afloat. We saw their signal-fires announcing us; we learned that the viceroy was at the head of two thousand soldiers on the hills, hoping to give us battle. Four great galleons he once sent out after us, but we showed them our stern and went laughing seaward, three miles to their two. So might bumblebees chase a wasp.

But the *Cacafuego* eluded us, always a little ahead of our swoopings on the ports, yet always a little less ahead, only two days at last, and then Drake's nephew claimed the golden chain, shouting the chase from the crow's nest where he roosted, a bird of good omen.

We were to seaward when he sighted her, surging along in the light shore haze. By some fair chance she had sailed always ahead of the word of our coming, it would seem, but, though we fast outsped her, Drake would be cautious.

"We shall tell her who we are by our very speed," he said. "They build not for swiftness under Philip. We must creep on her leisurely, my lads, or she may make inshore to some hidden port and set too great a force against us. Surprize is our best ally. Moone, see that thou settest a drag on our way with wine-casks. We hold the weather; we'll slide down to her like a homing dove to its mate."

Our blazoned sails had long since gone; our banners and our bannerets were rags; there was naught to show us other than a tiny Spaniard drifting slowly down as if by the attraction of the larger vessel, as will two chips in a dish of water.

She loomed high, rolling with dripping sides and much fuss of entrance to the seas that we cut with our sheerer bows. Her mariners came to her bulwarks and lolled lazily upon them; her officers gazed at us from the poop; her ports were closed.

So were ours, for that matter, but back of them the linstocks sputtered; the kegs of powder were open with their black crystals shining; the shot was piled, and the sailors, naked to the breech in the sweltering weather, waited with eager eyes the word.

The rest of us, already counting our gains, fretted with hands fiddling our weapons and some of the men who knew Spanish a bit, set up a sea-ditty in that tongue. Closer and closer we drifted, our sails slack, a careless loiterer that sought company.

Moone gave the first word, and the men jumped to the sheets. The cloths went taut; the wine-casks were hauled aboard while yet the Spaniards stared to see what manner of catch we had in hand. Scant two hundred yards of sea lay between when Drake shouted with a flash of his white teeth—

"Fire and close!"

The muzzles spat flame and shot that thudded into the thick sides of the galleon and turned her idlers to a bewildered mob. We had passed as we fired the broadside, and now we came about and shot down so close we grazed her bulky walls as the grappling-irons were flung aloft to settle in her chains. Three or four of her cannon exploded in useless wrath among our top-gear, and with a great cry we were swarming up the sides of the *Cacafuego* after Drake.

It needed not our battle-yell. One glimpse of Drake rushing at them with lit face and swinging sword that whistled in wide circles as he went was enough.

"El Draque!" they wailed and flung their weapons down.

Six days it took for us to put aboard what we took from her. I kept the tally. One hundredweight of gold there was, uncoined

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silver that totaled twenty tons, thirteen ryals of coin and plate, nuggets, silk, wines—a glorious cargo. The *Golden Hynde* was a golden hynde indeed.

There were weapons and crucifixes rarely gemmed, a golden falcon with an emerald in its breast, service of plate in gold and silver; we could have sunk the ship with what we left and hated to relinquish. Day after day we dug deep into her hold, bringing up bars of precious metal, hallooing at some special discovery, singing, as we worked, good English songs, while the chapfallen Dons looked on.

"Now, by my life, there is no going back!" cried Drake. "They'll set a chain of ships to catch us from Guatulco to Magellan strait! Here is the fortune of all of us, once we win back to Merrie England!"

So on we went. At the Isle of Caines we took on fresh water and fresh fish, and wood for our cooking-fire from a forest where the munckeys swung by their tails and chattered at us; where dragon-beasts, scaled with leather, called *alargatoes*, cried weirdly in the river mouth. At Guatulco we bearded the *alcaldes* of the town at their council, haled them aboard and made them send word ashore that we should be revictualed.

Still northward. Two more ships we took and discovered, as it turned out, something more precious than all the loot that ballasted us so deep. This was a set of charts made by cunning Chinese pilots, opening the secret seaways to Cathay, to Zipangu, to the Moluccas and Java and all the ocean southward and to west of us. Without them it were doubtful whether even Drake could have won home at last and not perished in the desert deeps from lack of food.

Long we gloated over them of nights, and, as we held our way toward the Anian Strait, through mysterious mists that made day and night alike, struggling through beds of kelpy weed and hearing through noise of sea-bears barking through the gloom, warned by surf that pounded on unseen cliffs, I noted Drake ever eye them more carefully, poring with studious, stern eyes in a face that grew permanently grim with the advance against the Arctic cold.

Floes floated by us so close that we could smell the ice. Bergs bore down on us through the fogs, and, if the weather cleared, we saw spouting whales and the glitter of frozen fields. The spray froze on our rigging, and the bulwarks were sheathed with crystal. We were bitterly cold, and our faces and hands chapped and cracked in that awful weather that silently gripped us and pinched us to the bone. Ever the ice grew closer—grouped to thwart us—the cheeks of the men hollowed, and their eyes sank in the black caves of the sharp sockets. Scurvy broke out at last, and Drake held council.

It was like an assembly of fantoms. The long weeks of groping in the fog and then the constant cold seemed to have leached the blood out of us, to have congealed the spirits of us. There had been no violent storms, only the steady swash of seas half hidden under veils of mist, the steady menace of some unknown—but not unfelt—resistance, slowly increasing, the gradual tightening of a giant's hand that said:

"Be careful, now I am warning you. Presently you will be too late. And you will surely die a hideous death in life, the ship locked in my frozen embrace, your stiff bodies, blackened by the frost, withered, shrunken but unperishing, lying there for all time embalmed upon the ice!"

SO, AT least, I thought, and, as I looked upon the patchy faces of my comrades, lean as monks in famine, I seemed to read in their faded eyes the same belief. Only Drake held a hint of vigor. Before him were spread the Chinese charts.

"We have come to an end," he said. "The ice closes. If it is thus in early Summer, we can have no hope of forcing passage when Winter turns the keys. And we know not for certain that there is a strait nor that in this land of fogs where Magellan has marked his map with clouds, that we should ever find the entrance. But we can not turn back the way that we have come. They will be too many for us. Trevennion, what is thine accounting of the value of our cargo?"

I had roughly estimated it, but I was sure that I was close to the real figures, vast though seemed the sum. I caught a glitter in the eyes of my listeners, some faint semblance of returning spirits lured by a vague fancy of what such value meant translated into things that could be bought

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in Merrie England, so many, many weary leagues away from this chill country.

"Three million crowns," I said.*

There is a spell in figures, a magic that will rouse the leaven of greed in a dying man—that or the hope of independence, free enjoyment of the good things of this life.

"A noble sum," said Drake. "We be rich men, all of us. But 'tis small use to us in these latitudes. How to get back? The *Golden Hynde* is foul of bottom. The most sluggish galleon could sail a circle round us. This then is my plan. We will turn back, not far, so we find warmer weather and some silent bay where we may careen and outfit. Then, by the grace of God and these maps, it shall be ho for the Moluccas, for Java, for India and so for Madagascar, the Cape and up to home again!

"Our riches shall be an earnest of what lies for the future harvesting and shall start such a fire in the hearts of Englishmen, such an assurance of new lands, new wealth, as shall bid for one great upheaval to throw off once and forever the halting policies of Burleigh and see our country take its rightful place. Yea, our riches shall make a golden-gemmed hilt for the bright unsheathed sword of our righteousness, a sword that shall set the whole world free.

"Come, gallant hearts, let us about from this sluggish neighborhood and coast southward till the blood flows strong and fast once more within our veins, scrape off the weeds and barnacles from our keel, revictual and refit and then westward ho, my hearties, westward ho! To set a circle round the earth, a belt of empire to be worn by England, Mistress of the Seas!"

The vital flame of the man warmed us, and we cheered him before we poured out on deck, glad for once to tug at ropes as stiff as iron, at cloths that were as stubborn as if carved out of wood. Round we came and set sail to the south.

Now and then the fog lifted, and we saw stern cliffs white-based with leaping foam, above them dark forests of mighty trees, somber and lofty, that ever lined the shores. Sometimes the gray sky was patched with blue, and the wind blew warmer. But we were a sorry crew with sick men lying on the deck whenever the sun broke through the mist, longing for fresh meats and juicy fruits, sea-tired, land-hungry.

It was July before we found what we wanted, and by that time the *Golden Hynde* was a sluggish thing, deep-bearded with marine growths, heavy with her treasure ballast, laboring in the seas, groping a way along the cloud-wrapped shore. The wind blew gustily over our starboard quarter, forcing us ever to tack off from the land whenever the boom of surf or the loom of a cliff through a rent of the fog curtain warned us we were too close for safety.

But, with the coming of Midsummer, the weather brightened. The fog would lift at ten in the morning and hold clear for some six hours, wrapping us in a sopping blanket again as the sun descended and the breeze failed. One Summer noon we caught sight of a great dome of silver, far back of the coast hills. That afternoon we passed some Indians in their crude boats hauling flashing fish from the sea by lines.

One of these craft we passed within a biscuit-toss, the savages gazing at us motionless until Drake hailed them in a kindly tone. With much persuasion they came timidly aboard to fall prostrate on the deck. Gifts heartened them, and they presented us with their fish, which were of the same shaping and the same red flesh as our own English salmons, but larger. By signs they told us of a deep opening in the coast farther south into which a river poured that went far back into the land—how far they knew not.

Drake's eyes brightened.

"This may be the Northwest Passage," he said. "We must adventure it after the *Golden Hynde* is careened. Thou, Angus, shalt take the pinnace and a crew and look this up. Trevennion, make thy picture-talk with these creatures. Haply they may know of some close-by harborage. I doubt not their tribe will be friendly."

I took them to the cabin, where they looked on me with liquid, wondering eyes while I made shift of my gift at drawing and drew pictures of our ship with a foul bottom and then lying on her side while we worked over her. I drew a gently sloping beach and a flat drawing of a bay. They were apt to catch my meaning, though they seemed to regard me as a god rather than a man.

They nodded and indicated that they knew such a spot and would pilot us there.

* The actual value of the treasure brought back by Drake in the *Golden Hynde* has been estimated at eight hundred thousand pounds (four million dollars). In this accounting must be reckoned the far greater purchasing value of such an amount at that time.—AUTHOR.

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I gave them a knife, a common thing but with a good cutting edge, with which I severed a hair from my head. They made uncouth protestations of delight and gave me in return their spears, long shafts of hard wood, cleft at one end with heads of a black substance like jet, notched and flaked.

When we came on deck, the day was clear and fine, the sails drawing well and the poor, keel-dragging ship surging with some show of spirit on an inshore tack. On the poop and at the rails stood the men, gazing toward white cliffs, verdure crowned, bright in the sun. The Indians pointed, nodding to a headline hard by.

I reported my success to Drake.

"It augurs well," he said. "Surely this is a providential happening. Look at the gleam of those chalky cliffs! Almost I could persuade myself that we were sailing up-channel to Plymouth once again. 'Tis a fair land that was hidden by these misty curtains. We shall take possession of it in the name of our sovereign lady, and it shall be called New Albion."

We took advantage of the tide and drove the *Golden Hynde* on to a fair beach, rigging a windlass to drag her farther from the sea, while sailors fixed their tackles and gently careened her upon her starboard bilges. She made a sorry sight, her oaken planks foul with green slime and streamers of brown, weedy beard, crusted with shells. The Indians gathered on the height above us, curious but timid, and we made no present overtures toward them, save to a small party headed by our pilot friends who brought us berries, salmon and the welcome flesh of deer and a shaggy brown bear.

The mist rolled in with evening, and we made great fires upon the beach, holding a revel, roaring out sea-songs, new life within us. In the morning on the cliff stood the immobile savages as if they had not moved all night. Drake ordered ceremonial attire, and we clad ourselves in our best, with armor and bright weapons. Then Chaplain Fletcher in his robes led us to where some of the men had reared a crude altar and suspended a bell. There we held service while the Indians, seeing our rites and hearing solemn response and chanting, took heart and slowly gathered in an outer circle.

Drake took out his sword, kissed the hilt and flashed the blade aloft.

"So do I take possession of all this fair land," he cried, "in the name of Elizabeth, Queen of all England, styling it New Albion."

A cannon roared from the ship, and the musketeers fired their pieces.

Down dropped the savages upon the sand, and one of them, the chief among them, set Drake's foot upon his neck and made signs that we should live with them, possess the country and rule it over them with Drake as king. Drake turned to Fletcher, who had a gift with savage tongues.

"Teach them, Master Fletcher," he said, "that we are men, not gods. That we must go anon to our land but presently we may return, or others of us, but first we shall teach them the true God."

Also he ordered a copper band made by the artificer, engraved with the date of our landing and a dedication to the queen. This was riveted about the trunk of a sturdy tree upon the cliff.

DESPITE the fogs, this was, to us, a little Eden while the work of cleaning the *Golden Hynde* went blithely forward and Master Fletcher and myself, with pictures and a growing mastery of words, labored among them—he for their souls, I with Drake's order to get some plan of the great land-locked bay they spoke of farther to the south, where the deep river, or strait, was set.

At last I was able to bring to him a chart showing an entrance that I estimated, from their description, to be a mile in breadth, gated to the north by a high hill they called the Mount of Tamal, that being the name of the Indians who lived thereon, men of great stature. The bay opened north and south like outspread wings, and to the north flowed the river current. The tides ran far up, they told me, farther than they had ever ventured, with deep waters. It began to look indeed as if this might be the Northwest Passage that Frobisher believed in. So thought Drake.

We had brought with us a knocked-down open boat, fitted with mast and sail, able to hold a score and fit for voyaging. This we had set up under the direction of Thomas Moone. Drake assigned it to Angus. He was to take ten men in all, with two Indians for pilotage, make the bay, ascend it and so gage the river, or strait, making soundings. I was to go along and prepare a chart.

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"Ten days I give you," said Drake. "It may be a voyage of peril. Take store of arms and powder, compass and provisions. Choose your own crew. I would go with you, but I fear to leave the ship with all its treasure for which I am responsible to her Majesty."

I was all agog for the adventure. We set out one sparkling morning in high feather, Angus, Gilbert, Reed, myself, Peter, a grizzled boatswain named Mordaunt and four sailors, Pike, Congreve, Law and Jonson, stout fellows all and as apt at fighting as they were with sea gear. We drew off from the beach with Drake waving a farewell. Neptune was by his side, whining, looking from the boat back to Drake. I verily believe the dog sensed something forward that was hidden to us. At all events he made up his mind between his first master and his second and suddenly rushed into the water, diving through a wave and coming up with chest high out, swimming at a great rate. Angus checked the rowers, and I stood up to order him back, much as I ached to have him with me. Drake stood laughing on the strand and shouted at me.

"Take him along, Trevennion. Thou mayest need him to catch fish for you."

So Neptune plowed along, and I helped him dripping into the pinnace, where he sprayed us with his shaking and then snuggled down contented at my feet. We rowed out to where we caught the breeze and so out the little bay where, on the beach, the sparkle of Drake's corselet flashed like a mirror as he watched us leave.

Angus relaxed discipline, and we made high holiday of it as we sailed down close enough to see the sea-bears sliding off the spouting rocks with gruff barkings to which Neptune responded. Even Reed made merry for once, and the Indians squatting in the bows marveled to see us laughing and shouting merry as grigs. Presently Mordaunt in his gruff, salted voice set up a chanty and we all joined in.

Captain Drake has gone to sea,
High, sir, ho, sir.
With a jovial company,
Aboard the *Golden Hynde*, oh!

Row, row, pull and go,
Crack your backs, my hearties, oh!

In our ship of fivescore tons,
High, sir, ho, sir.
Fought we Philip's galleons,
Aboard the *Golden Hynde*, oh!

Pull and haul, mind the squall,
Stretch your arms, my bullies, oh!

Girls and kisses we'll not lack,
High, sir, ho, sir.
When to Plymouth we hail back,
Aboard the *Golden Hynde*, oh!

Row, row, pull and go,
Show a leg, my bullies, oh!

Safely stowed within our hold,
High, sir, ho, sir.
We have silver, gems and gold,
Aboard the *Golden Hynde*, oh!

Heel and toe, pipe below,
Dance away, my dandies, oh!

They shall kiss our healing scars,
High, sir, ho, sir.
Throng to meet us bold jack tars,
Aboard the *Golden Hynde*, oh!

Row, row, pull and go,
Bend your oars, my hearties, oh!

Some sweet lass I'll ne'er forsake,
High, sir, ho, sir.
Shall be proud I sailed with Drake,
Aboard the *Golden Hynde*, oh!

Sail ho, watch her go,
Keep your matches lighted, oh!

Philip pays the parson's fee,
High, sir, ho, sir.
Gives us all a dow-e-ry,
Aboard the *Golden Hynde*, oh!

Row, row, pull and go,
Break your backs, my bullies, oh!

TO BE CONCLUDED

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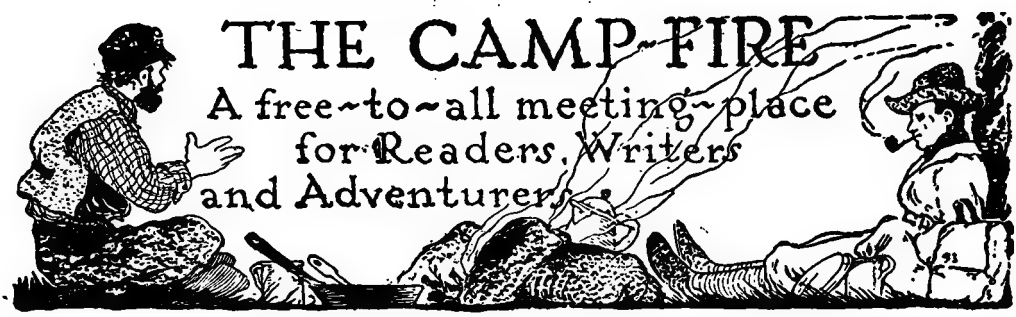

AT ONE of our Camp-Fires W. C. Tuttle asked whether some of us could identify an old muzzle-loading revolver that had come into his possession. Quite a few replies have come in and some of them are given here. First Mr. Tuttle's letter:

Digging through the rust on the barrel I find the inscription: "Savage R. F. A. Middletown, Ct., H. S. North, Pat. 1856." The gun is about fifteen inches long and I think it is a .38-caliber. It is a muzzle-loading revolver, with an extra high hammer, which cuts off the rear sight unless cocked. Six-shooter. It has a peculiar shaped butt, which fits the hand in good shape.

THE novel feature is in the action. Instead of having the cylinder turn from the trigger-pull, there is another trigger, or lever, if you please, behind the pull-trigger, with a ring to fit the second finger. You turn the cylinder with your second finger and pull with the index finger—and pray. I reckon it will weigh about four pounds.

The man I got it from claims it was picked up in Mexico. It has seen a lot of hard usage. My dad, who is an old gun-man, and who knows a lot about old guns, told me that it was a new one on him. As far as I can see—awful rusty—the rifles run straight down the barrel. Would like mighty well to have somebody tell me something about this style and make of gun, 'cause it looks like a killer.—W. C. TUTTLE.

THE replies follow. Others were received by Mr. Tuttle or at this office, but the following seem enough to do the work:

Visalia, Calif.

The revolver you describe is the Civil War "Savage" revolver, caliber .3625, 5500 of which, at twenty dollars each, were contracted for by the United States Government in 1861.

The advantage claimed for these guns was the gas-tight joint formed between the cylinder and barrel by the reaming out of the front of the cylinder which allowed each, in turn, to fit over the rear end of the barrel, the action of the ring trigger being to first slide back the cylinder, then rotate it while cocking the arm, which was fired by the second or plain trigger.

Owing to its excessive weight and awkwardness as well as to its complicated mechanism, the revolver never became popular in competition with the Colt and other simple actions.

HENRY S. NORTH of Middletown, Connecticut, to whom, in 1856, was granted the patent covering the toggle or reciprocating joint between the cylinder and frame, may have been of the Simon North family who were celebrated gun-makers and inventors for at least three generations.

In 1859 patents were granted to North and Edward Savage of Cromwell, Connecticut, who may have been of the family of the present Savage Arms Company, these patents covering the rings or thimbles forming the gas-check at the front of the cylinder.

In 1860 Savage and North took out further patents for the improvement of the arm and in that year assigned their rights to the Savage Revolving Firearms Company of Middletown, Connecticut.

In my little collection of about fifty pieces of American made pistols and revolvers, I but recently added one of these Savages, it being a gift from a captain friend now in the service.—G. L. CHESTER.

Cumberland, Md.

Anent that old revolver of W. C. Tuttle's, my father (seventy-four years old) says it is one that the Government issued to soldiers in the Mexican War; that two neighbors each had one; and that they were highly dangerous to fire.—CLIFFORD E. DAVIS.

Middletown, Conn.

The gun he describes with the double pull, one for hammer and loop or ring for revolving chamber, could be identified by a number of the old residents of this town, as a good many of them were made here in about 1856. North was the inventor and I am told their factory was in what is known as the Rockfall district of this town. My informant, who knew it well, says it was known to him as the North Savage Company.

Another party here, who is a veteran of the Civil War, says he has one of these revolvers and that when Company A, 2nd Reg. Mansfield Guard, the local company, marched away to war each man was presented with one of these guns.

May it not have been so that as long as then, some of these guns got down into Mexico?—AVERY T. ELMER.

Boston, Mass.

The Savage Revolving Firearms Company did business at Middletown, Connecticut, prior to and during the Civil War. They manufactured North's and Savage's patents.

I am enclosing you two pen-and-ink drawings of two types in my collection of firearms. I assume from your description that yours is of the type marked "2."

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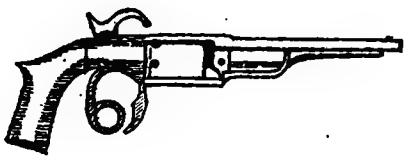
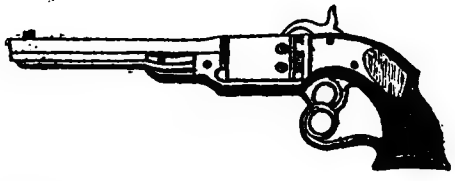
1



2



No. 1 is a Savage Navy Revolver, early pattern, marked "E. Savage, Middletown, Ct., H. S. North patented June 17, 1856." Length fourteen inches, length of barrel seven inches, caliber .36, number of shots, six.

No. 2 is a Savage Navy Revolver, developed pattern, marked, "Savage R. F. A. Co. Middletown, Ct. H. S. North Patented June 17, 1856, January 18, 1859, May 15, 1860." Length of barrel seven and one-eighth inches, caliber .41, number of shots, six.

In the attempt to get a gas-tight joint between barrel and cylinder each chamber is reamed at the mouth and fits, in its turn, over the rear end of the barrel. Pulling with the second finger on the ringed lever draws back the cylinder from the barrel, rotates and also cocks the hammer. Releasing the lever lets the cylinder move forward to fit over the barrel and also leaves the weapon cocked.

Although rather a clumsy way of self-cocking, the weapon is not a bad one and shoots very well. Both of mine are in good order, and I have fired them both, although I should personally use in preference a Colt .45 of the patent of 1871, '72 and '75, which, indeed is the gun I carry when I carry any. To my mind it has never been improved upon, and I much prefer it to later and more modern patterns.—LEWIS APPLETON BARKER.

FROM R. A. Sutliff, Portland, Oregon, comes the information that the gun is listed and described in Bannerman's catalog and that he thinks it was made for a New York cavalry regiment during the Civil War. There is a good general suggestion for gun-cranks. Francis Bannerman, 501 Broadway, New York, is the largest dealer in second-hand arms and ammunition in the world, as many of you know. His store is like a museum and on an island up the Hudson he has an arsenal that could keep quite a number of revolutions going. His catalog is large and unique, crammed with information, and is almost as much text-book and treatise as it is catalog. It costs 50 cents and is worth many times that to any gun-crank not already possessing it.

ANOTHER gun inquiry. Gun cranks please rally to the call. But please remember that all communications concerning firearms are to be sent, *not* to the magazine, but to one or the other of the editors of our new "Firearms" department under "Ask Adventure."

Concordia, Kansas.

Can any one give me some information concerning an old pistol which came into my possession some two months ago?

THE gun is about seven inches long; having a huge curved handle or butt made partly of a hard, straight-grained wood and partly of iron. There is a very strong spring in the butt, which controls the hammer.

The hammer is curved and high, and it is set in such a position as to interfere with sighting unless cocked.

There is no trigger guard and the trigger is short. From the hammer on to about two inches the barrel is octagonal. The rest is round. Just in front of the rear sight is the inscription, "Arston and Knox, New York, 1854." And on the under side of the barrel is the number 142.

THE gun is put together in two pieces by two screws, one in the butt and one in the barrel just below the hammer. The rear sight is wide and flat and the front sight is merely a small bead. The rifling runs straight down the barrel. The pistol is, I think, a .32 caliber.

It is of the muzzle-loading type, and is fired by a cap. It is awfully rusty and has been knocked around quite a bit. It was plowed up in a field near this town about two years ago. It was in part of a rotten box, the box being banded by heavy brass bands.

I would be very much obliged if some one could tell me about this "Old Timer."—BYRON E. COOK.

FOLLOWING Camp-Fire custom, Romaine H. Lowdermilk stands up and introduces himself on the occasion of his first story in our magazine:

Wickenburg, Arizona.

For a long while I have looked forward to the time when I could come before the Camp-Fire and tell you fellows what a nifty bird I am. So I'll start right out and point with pride to all my own achievements and possibly deplore the outrageous conduct of everybody else.

TO BEGIN with I am an argumentative cuss possessed of an earnest belief that whatsoever is done so and so could and perhaps should be done in another way. Then, too, I am addicted to egotism and recklessness which, coupled with a disorderly inclination to delve into human nature and find out what makes the other fellow "tick," keeps me pretty busy. Already my friends view me with alarm owing to various adventures I have got them into while in search of knowledge.

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Speaking of knowledge, I will take this opportunity to touch upon my schooling. Indeed, I shall touch so lightly upon that subject that the tinkle thereof will scarcely be heard. My only approach to the real thing was during the year I spent at Baker University, Baldwin, Kansas. However, I will add in conclusion that throughout my school life I studied hard and really made an honest effort to learn.

IN LOOKING backward I can see some incidents that stick out as turning points, or at least points that to me appear as important. The first occurred twenty-nine years ago down near the Indian Territory line—I was born. Eleven years later came a trip into Oklahoma where I learned to ride a horse and eat watermelons. Then, while in public school up in northeastern Kansas, during vacations I worked for a building contractor who paid me real money for the fun of taking chances with his team of rapid-fire delivery ponies and threw in sound advice and encouragement together with consistent opinions on thrift and industry that I find still remain in good working order. His men took it upon themselves to take the conceit out of me and I hope they did a good job of it. Although several people have given me direct aid at different times in my existence and I am in no wise forgetful, still I feel that this contractor had more to do with molding my future (my father having died when I was three) than any other man. No one ever associated with old Joe Spurgeon and came away without spiritual and material benefit.

Later, at sixteen, I got in a year on the cow-ranges of Texas and New Mexico, which gave me the impetus that finally led to my settling, nine years ago, at my present location in Arizona. Which brings me down to my immediate status: I am a rancher—not a writer. But, sometimes, I write.

IN BETWEEN these mile-posts I have had time to learn to walk the wires, slack and tight, and ride inverted and otherwise upon a horse. Following this bent I spent a few months with the circus and in vaudeville. I also sang a season with a musical comedy company and was the mold of fashion all along the kerosene lamp circuit. Outside of this and during vacations from school I have worked in the timber, at construction jobs, and on newspapers. Also waited table, decorated windows and park benches. All of which I enjoyed immensely because I treated it in the light of adventure.

The only conclusion I can see—if any—is that I don't amount to much and don't think I ever will, and anybody can do everything I ever did if they want to, and try. My adventures have all occurred just around the corner, just modest occurrences anybody can find any old place in the United States, and I regret there haven't been more of 'em.

In closing I wish to repeat I am glad to have met up with the Camp-Fire and I hope you'll like my story. And, if you don't like my story, I hope you'll say so and thereby help me and Hoffman learn what you like and why you like it.—ROMAINE H. LOWDERMILK.

WHO can supply the best sub-title or characterizing line for our magazine, such as could (but probably won't) be printed on the cover along with the name "Adventure," or used on the first pages, on office stationery and wherever such a line would be useful and appropriate? Anywhere from 2 to 10 words, the fewer the better. Glad to send a five-year's subscription to any one suggesting an acceptable line. No rules or regulations except that the offer ends whenever we get what we're looking for. Try as many times as you like, but remember that the fewer the words used, the more likely you are to score. It would need quite a wonderful idea to warrant more than five or six words at most. Three is nearer the mark.

There is one rule, after all. Please address all letters on this subject to Harry E. Wade (who is back with us after service in the Army). If you wish to write about something else too, please keep this matter on a separate sheet.

A WORD from J. Allan Dunn on his story in this issue. And concerning this interesting question of pre-historic races in South America we have, waiting for an opening at our Camp-Fire, two other interesting letters from Edgar Young and H. A. Lamb.

There may be those who will cavil at the bringing in to the Peru of the Sixteenth Century a golden-haired, blue-eyed maid as a representative of pre-historic, or at least, pre-Incan, inhabitants. Such a question has already caused much controversy. I suggest that her origin and her survival were not impossible, emphasizing the fact that all Incan legends agreed that the men who built the astounding, and apparently unfinished, buildings on the shores of Lake Titicaca and elsewhere, were not Incan and were long-bearded white-skinned and blue or gray of eyes. And beards, to an Incan and others of his latitudes, were as strange as light-colored eyes. Anthropologically, it is your Nordic man, your long-skull, your blue or gray eye, who is hairy of chin and chest.

NOW bear with me a moment and see what Prescott says in his "Conquest of Peru," for he was a most thorough historian:

"Another legend speaks of certain white and bearded men, who, advancing from the shores of Lake Titicaca, established an ascendency over the natives, and imparted to them the blessings of civilization."

Also:

From "authorities contemporary with the Conquest, the story of the bearded white men finds its place in most of their legends."

We may, therefore, reasonably conclude that there existed in the country a race advanced in civilization before the time of the Incas. Who this race were, and whence they came, may afford a tempting theme for inquiry to the speculative antiquarian.

Ranking (Historical Researches on the Conquest

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of Peru, etc., by the Moguls, London, 1827) finds it highly probable that the first Inca of Peru was a son of the Grand Khan Kublai.

Why not a Norseman or a Dane, the greatest viking races of all, or their descendants setting out from Crete? Such things are as much mysteries as the carving of the great statues on Easter Island and on other islands that form a chain all across Polynesia and Micronesia along the course of the migratory currents and which resemble, as much as anything, the statue of Memnon attempted by less skilful sculptors.

NEXT, as to the crossing of the South American continent by Trevennion and his company by way of the Napo and Amazon. It was done before his time and after. Let me quote for those of our readers who are sticklers for probability. More power to 'em.

Again from Prescott: Though not literally:

Pizarro appointed his brother Gonzalez over the territory of Quito with instructions to explore the western cinnamon-producing country. In carrying out orders, Gonzalez Pizarro and his men suffered terribly but, eventually, after finding the cinnamon woods, were tempted farther by reports of much gold on the Napo. They found the waterfall but not the gold. His men were weakened by fevers and lack of food and Gonzalez constructed a boat from the forest timbers, using nails from the shoes of his horses that had died, gum from the trees for pitch and tattered garments for oakum. He gave the command of this first European vessel to float on those inland waters to one Francisco de Orellana, a cavalier from Truxillo, and sent him down the Napo in this brigantine (*sic*) to where it emptied into a still greater river that flowed toward the east. (The river of the Amazons.) There was to be found a rich district and a populous nation and Orellana was to procure a stock of provisions and bring them back for the relief of Pizarro and his men and to condition them for the march, since the vessel could hold but half the company.

ORELLANA reached the Amazon confluence in three days. Supplies were non-existent. The tales of riches and populous communities were fables. The current was too strong for him to hope to return against it and he decided—with much commendable valor and much detestable cowardice in the desertion of his comrades with Pizarro—to sail down the Amazon and so to Spain. Sanchez de Vargas, a cavalier of good descent, objected to the abandonment of Pizarro and Orellana left him in the wilderness to shift for himself. And Orellana, without compass or pilot, did descend the Amazon and, after touching at Cubagua, reach Spain, where he wrote his statement (preserved in Spanish archives still), and was rewarded by a royal grant upon the realms he had discovered on the Amazon. But he died on the outward voyage and Portugal eventually got the lands. Pizarro got back to Quito after a year:

"their horses gone, their arms broken and rusted, the skins of wild animals instead of clothes hanging loosely about their limbs, their long and matted locks streaming wildly down their shoulders, their faces burned and blackened by the tropical sun, their bodies wasted by famine and sorely disfigured by scars—it seemed as if the charnel-house had given up its dead as, with uncertain step, they glided slowly onwards, like a troop of dismal specters!"

IN 1769 a woman, described as a delicate female, a Madame Godin, attempted to descend the Amazon to its mouth in an open boat. With her were seven persons. The boat was wrecked. One after another all but Madame Godin died of hunger and disease and she was left alone in the howling wilderness. Friendly Indians at last conducted her to a French settlement, her hair perfectly white from terror and hardship. M. de Condamine in his history of a personal trip, "Voyage dans l'Amérique Meridionale," quotes this experience from details given him in a letter from the husband of Madame Godin.—J. ALLAN DUNN.

The next is part of an argument between Mr. Dunn and Mr. Noyes, at that time on our staff. Only part of the argument. It was a wonder, and, when the dust of good-natured battle cleared away, I gathered up some of the scraps for our Camp-Fire. I don't yet know just what it was all about, but the following pieces from one of Mr. Dunn's letter's make good reading:

Let me tell you why I was so anxious to write a "Westward Ho" story when Hoffman first mentioned it. I am Devon born. My own forebears sent out their ship to join Drake and Hawkins in the Armada. In our little village of Duncombe there are at least five families proud of having some forefather either sail with Drake or against the Armada. Small wonder that when I went to Winchester and afterwards to Oxford I revered the name of Drake and gobbled all that I could find. In the Bodleian Library is a chair made from the planks of the *Golden Hynde*, in the library is the original MS. of Chaplain Fletcher of the expedition and many other early writings anent Drake, including "Drake Redivivus" by his nephew. In the Greenwich Hospital is a model of the pinnace *Minion* (Mignon).

"SAILORS will object to pinnace as used." If they do they are not sailors. I have been at times criticised for my navigation by readers who did not hold what I do, a master's certificate, and who have not sailed, as I have, hundreds of leagues in the South Pacific in an eight-ton sloop. Please listen for a while to what others say. Remembering the model of the pinnace *Minion* in Greenwich Hospital the while.

Century Dictionary, last edition—Pinnace. a. A small vessel, *generally with two masts rigged like those of a schooner*, and capable of being propelled with oars; a galley; so called because built of pine wood.

Stow, Elizabeth, an. 1595. "A pinnace in Leaden Hall, being of burden about five or sixe tun."

Pope. "Swift as a swallow sweeps the liquid way
The *winged pinnace* shot along the sea."

Winthrop. Hist. New England, I. 67. "There came from Virginia into Salem a pinnace of eighteen tons, laden with corn and tobacco."

Webster's Dictionary, last edition—Pinnace. A

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light sailing vessel, often schooner-rigged, sometimes also using oars.

Remember here that even the big galliasses and galleys of Spain and nearly all the vessels of that day, save galleons, were merging from the sail-and-oar period into sail alone.

LET'S take Clark Russell next. Few will dispute with him. He writes in the *Daily Telegraph* of London of June, 1888, a commemorative article on the tercentenary of the defeat of the Armada, an article accepted by all England, and writes as follows:

Concerning the bringing in to Plymouth of the sighting of the Armada in the channel by Master Thomas Fleming, a smuggler, who came in "his pinnace, a sailing craft of perhaps 100 tons."

I refer also to: "Drake," an English Epic by Alfred Noyes, American edition, F. A. Stokes Co., N. Y., surely a standard work; to "Drake and His Yeomen," by James Barnes, Macmillan, N. Y., and to the older MSS. and printed writings of Hakluyt, Purchas, Fletcher (Chaplain of the *Golden Hynde*), Pretty, and "Drake Redivivus" (by Drake's own nephew).

Mention is made of the pinnace *Minion* at Guadalupe, the Isle of Pines and San Juan de Ulua on Drake's voyage previous to his round-the-world trip. She is thrice mentioned as having landed *114* men.

I ADMIT that the word "pinnace" is now generally used as any small boat or ship's tender, but *it was not then*. The word "cutter" is similarly twisted in modern phraseology but I can't help that. There were small pinnaces, Drake carried what he termed "tiny pinnaces" in sections, but a vessel of 100 tons (W. Clark Russell), one of eighteen tons (Winthrop) or even six (Stow) can not be styled a small vessel. The word "pink" meant anything small in old English, yet the vessels styled pinks made trips across the Atlantic and around the Cape. I will not, at all willingly, give way an inch in this matter because I am right and have with mine own eyes seen the original MSS. in the Bodleian. I can give you the Clark Russell American reprint if you want to look it up.

NOW we come to "pavisade." There must be something wrong with the Standard Dictionary. I haven't got one, relying on the latest Century and Webster's. Both give considerable space to "pavissade" or "pavesade" which in broad sense means—any extended or continuous defense of a temporary nature as a screen, parapet or the like used in warfare. The Century quotes from

R. Eden, travels of Peter Martyr (First Books on America— "Owre men had bynne in great daunger (from Indian arrows) if they had not byn defended by the cages or pavisses of their shyppes and their targettes."

AS TO the hidden rubies of the English mariner. Chaplain Fletcher sets down the incident as I have related it. Alfred Noyes uses it the same way. It is history. I have tried to smooth it over in the change I shall make in the MS. when it reaches me.

I KNOW that the Doughtys seems a bit commutative. I don't know why Drake let the one off—but he did. Alfred Noyes ascribes Drake's belief in Doughty as coming from his own simple nature. I have tried to suggest otherwise—that Drake stood it as a matter of policy, knowing his own peculiar mixture of jack-tars and gentleman adventurers.

I am sorry there were two Doughtys who might get mixed up a bit. But there were and the main reason I am writing all this stuff to you is because I want you and Hoffman to understand thoroughly that I do not undertake an historical novel lightly. Up to the time that Trevennion leaves Drake every incident is *historically correct*. As I say, I have plugged up hard in Philadelphia, in Boston and in New York for modern notes on old commentaries.—J. ALLAN DUNN.

READ the following news report from a New York *Sun* last Summer. It happens that the measure under consideration was one for prohibition during the war, but that has nothing to do with the point.

The defeat of the recess plan has changed the situation regarding this legislation, inasmuch as senators who would have opposed its consideration if it interfered with their plans for a recess will have this excuse to offer and are expected to vote with the drys now that Congress must stay on the job.

The point is that it is given out as an ordinary news report that some of our United States Senators vote yes or no on an important national measure according to whether they get their vacations or not. The emphasis is on the word "ordinary." In other words, it is merely a matter of routine news that members of the United States Senate, instead of voting according to their understanding of the people's interests, vote according to their own personal interests—and extremely petty interests at that.

MAYBE the news report isn't true. But that doesn't affect the main point that we Americans accept such things as a matter of course. Just ordinary news. No outcry. No indignation. Not even comment. Just ordinary news.

But I say that such voting is black treason. If any Senators did change their vote on any national measure because they weren't allowed to go home on vacation, then those Senators are traitors to their country and betrayers of democracy. And a people who can permit such things to drift by as ordinary news have poor understanding of civic responsibility and real patriotism.

AMONG such a people there is great need of civic awakening. Patriotism that exists only in connection with war is good only during war and not good enough even

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then. There is need in our United States of the American League for Citizenship. And one of the chief offices of the League is to point out and condemn and rectify just such violations as this matter of "ordinary news" above. We need to be taught just what real citizenship and real patriotism are. We have need to be clean, and we can not be clean until we know very clearly and definitely what cleanness is.

HERE are some more letters concerning Captain W. F. Drannan. There is no other body of men and women like our Camp-Fire for investigating subjects connected with the history of the old West—or, indeed, any of the subjects within our general field of interest. And now it would seem that enough of us had had our chance to express opinion on this topic, so, what next? There are already a number of subjects up for investigation and data but there are a lot of us and we can always take on a few jobs more.

Some of the letters are addressed to the magazine, some to Mr. Brininstool, who not only printed his inquiry but wrote to various old-timers for information.

Fort Huachuca, Ariz.

E. A. BRININSTOOL:

I saw Captain Drannan in Douglas, Ariz., and heard him talk and talked with him. I came to the conclusion that his adventures were very largely the result of his imagination and, in support of my belief in this matter, will say I have been about forty years on the frontier (or what is known as the frontier).

I was personally acquainted with W. F. Cody (Buffalo Bill), Frank Grouard, and several other of the old plainsmen and border scouts who helped to make history in the sixties, seventies and eighties, besides a number of officers of the old Army, who were stationed at or near forts and places mentioned by "Capt." Drannan.

Now I have never heard of them ever mentioning his (Drannan's) name, or even say they had heard of him. I served one five-year enlistment in the First U. S. Infantry from 1878 to 1883, was stationed in places where Drannan claims to have been Chief of Scouts, and never heard of him.

Captain Dan Ming (an old frontiersman for fifty years) lives near here and, like the others mentioned, does not know the redoubtable "Captain Drannan."

According to his book, in which he tells of his Indian fights and killings, he was sure some bad *Hombre*. It is too bad that Uncle Sam did not have a company of scouts, all like him, with his faculty for mussing up Indians. They would have settled a vexed question very quickly.

I, of course, do not pretend to know all the old scouts of the West, but do know some of them, and they do not know "Captain W. F. Drannan."

There is no question but what he lived, moved and had his being in the places he speaks of in his book, but that he was the famous scout and frontiersman he claims to be is a matter open to argument.—J. W. BAKER.

New York.

I read your letter in Camp-Fire. Some years ago I read Drannan's book—found it in a library somewhere.

Like yourself, I've wondered who he was. I never met any one that ever heard of him and I was from April, 1866, until 1884 "on the plains." Was at old Fort Reno on Powder River until Feb. 20, 1867. Got my discharge that day and went up to Phil Kearney with reinforcements after the "massacre" of Dec. 21, 1866. Got located with Gen. Dandy, Q. M., and came down with Maj. Van Voast and party in April. Indians galore. We found the mail scattered in brush that Van Valzeh, Gen. Carrington's mail carrier, and Pte. Dickinson had started from Ft. Laramie with, but we never found their bodies.

At Bridgers Ferry I found Lieut. James Regan, who two years before had been my "bunkie" on Governors Island. He died in Manila a few years ago, a colonel, U. S. A. Put in some time at Ft. Laramie. A man named Brown had started a "hotel" on south side of Laramie River and could get a good meal for $1. Had a good time at Fort L. Once or twice a week used to ride down to Jules Coffee's ranch, five miles south, and pay $1 to play a game of billiards on a rotten table. More than once rode like —— going back 'cause we saw Indians. Had good times there. Those were the good old days. Nick Geneese, the scout, kept us well entertained.

Later rode over through Cache la Poudre and down to Denver. Took in all the Territory and down on the Trinity in Texas. Came back to Colorado in 1879 and was with McKinzie and 4th Cavalry in San Luis Valley. In all my wandering through that country and among the old-timers I never saw or heard of any one that had ever seen or heard of Capt. W. F. Drannan, and I thought I'd heard of them all.

Somewhere I got hold of another book on the order of Drannan's. It was written by a Capt. Brennen. Did you ever know or hear of him? Did you ever meet "Gov. Beale, Ex-Gov. of Wisconsin, sir," who had a ranch in 1866 a few miles west of Cottonwood Springs, old Ft. McPherson?—A. B. OSTRANDER.

IT LOOKS as if the next comrade hadn't herded sheep long enough to hurt him any. And cattlemen have been telling me that sheep are the thing nowadays anyway.

Douglas, Wyoming.

According to our friend, Mr. Tuttle—without whose stories life would not be worth living—sheep-herders are crazy or are affected mentally in some way. While I am only a common sheep-herder at $65 a month and, I claim to have a small amount of gray matter in my dome, I am writing this letter in reference to one in which Mr. Brininstool asks information concerning Capt. Wm. F. Drannan, "Chief-of-Scouts."

I have read his book and have asked my grandfather about this great Indian fighter. My

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grandfather was an "old-timer" on the plains, although he never rose to such heights of renown as an Indian fighter as to become famous.

He was well acquainted with a great number of the "old boys," and he said that he had never heard of Drannan outside of the book. He had the same opinion of the "Chief-of-Scouts" that Mr. Brininstool seems to have.

Grandfather worked for the old famous freighting concern of Majors Waddell and Russell, and was one of the first men to go into Solomon Valley in Central Kansas, so he ought to have some knowledge on the subject.—DECATUR K. REIS.

Greenwood, Nebraska.

I served in the 2d U. S. Cavalry from 1866 to '69 and we were scouting all over the country between Omaha and Salt Lake during that time. I was in L troop. I have seen, and my troop has been with, Antonio La Due, John O. Janese and Buffalo Bill and Little Buckshot, and in the Summer of '66 with Gee Conners looking after a stray band of horses that got away from Ft. Ellsworth, Kansas, but in all our travels up the Platte and through the Bad Lands to Salt Lake over the proposed route of the U. P. we never heard of such a person as Captain W. F. Drannan. I was discharged for expiration of term of service as corporal at Ft. D. A. Russell, Wyoming, May 16, 1869.—EDWARD BUTTS.

Kelsayville Lake, California.

I thought (like yourself) that I knew something about scouts, but, my word, I never "learn, see or hear tell" of Drannan. I was in Arizona, New Mexico, Western Texas and Colorado from 1864 to 1866. Know all about the Fort Phil Kearney massacre. Have fought the Apaches, Navajos, Arapahos, Cheyennes, Nez Perces, Bannocks and others. Was in the Sam Creek fight where so many redskins were made permanently friendly those days. After the Nez Perce and Bannock campaigns, I finally settled down, or was virtually chucked into the newspaper business in Walla Walla. I was shot at three times, had six libel suits, a scrap any time. Never apologized to any one but a woman once who got on the war-path on account of an article my reporter wrote. She came in to horsewhip me, but before she left she subscribed to the *Daily Statesman* for six months—paid her $5.00 like a little sport.—FRANK J. PARKER.

Navy Mobilization Sub-station,
El Paso, Texas.

I have seen Drannan in the flesh many times, but know nothing of his history. When I was a kid in Fort Worth, Texas, Captain Drannan used to draw my gaze every time I traversed Main Street. He had a chair, shaded by a large wago -umbrella, in the street next the sidewalk, and here he sat all day long, sometimes accompanied by an old woman. He was then selling his book, "Thirty-one Years on the Plains," and an amateurishly painted sign announced that he was the only living scout who had crossed the plains with Kit Carson. All this in the Summer of 1910. Later on, perhaps six months after, it was rumored that admirers had purchased him a house and lot in Mineral Wells, Texas, to which he had moved.

Sorry I can't say more concerning this old-timer. He seemed to be accepted at his face value in Fort Worth and dressed the part—buckskin suit, low-crowned Spanish sombrero and the rest.—EUGENE CUNNINGHAM, Chief Yeoman, U. S. N.

WHEN I asked Alex. McLaren for permission to pass his letters on to Camp-Fire he made the kind of reply that rings the bell. Fair play, good comradeship, give and take—that's it in a nutshell. There are some who turn just as eagerly to our Camp-Fire—to listen; who are always ready to take beans out of the common bag but who never put any beans into it. Some have no beans to contribute. That's all right and they're just as welcome among us as those that have. But there are some whose pockets fairly bulge with beans yet who go on taking beans out of the common pot without ever contributing any.

No, they are not holding out on us through intentional meanness and it has never occurred to them that they are open to the charge of being sponges. Some, with good experiences to relate, good information to pass along, hold back because they think it "wouldn't be interesting." Why not let *us* judge as to interest? Some mean to, but just never get to it. Some think they "can't write." This is no literary society!

If you know strange things and strange places, come across with a word about them. We don't care how you say it; what we want is the facts. Particularly if you are an old-timer, with knowledge and memories that no one nowadays can get for himself.

Quincy, Calif.

Camp-Fire is the first I always dig into. That's one place where we old stiffs, flotsam and jetsam, "desert rats," etc., can get together even though miles separate us materially. So any way that I can help enliven the Camp-Fire gathering I wish to. Most of my life has been spent in the open, in the wilds and out of way places, so a Camp-Fire is one of the "home fixin's" for me. May good luck strike you all over.—ALEX MCLAREN.

YOU'VE probably noted the three new departments added in the last issue to "Ask Adventure." South America is a large piece of map, but the two men now in charge are particularly familiar with the ground and from a good many angles. The new Canadian department is in charge of a resident Hudson's Bay Company factor, which should be sufficient guarantee of dependability.

—ARTHUR SULLIVANT HOFFMAN.

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LOOKING AHEAD FOR DEMOCRACY

1. Democracy Itself

THE social upheaval started by the war is an avalanche toward more real democracy, under the realization that real democracy can not exist when a majority is ruled by *any* minority—king or demagog, capital or labor, military clique or politicians. If the avalanche is not to take the autocratic path of force, the path of lawful democratic method must be cleared for it.

That path is not now clear because we have not known what democracy really is. We have a general idea, but no *definite, practical, fundamental standard of democracy to apply as test and measure of every concrete issue, great or small.*

DEMOCRACY is not a *form* of government, but a *principle* of government. Rule by the people. Socialism, our present system, Bolshevism, all are merely different forms or expressions of the same underlying principle. All three are at present unsound because each gives its real attention to the form, neglecting the principle upon which it is dependent.

The forms are, and must be, complex; the principle is simple. But the existence, efficiency and development of the principle are dependent upon an infinite complexity of factors. For *democracy itself is a state of mind, an attitude and practise of a people, principles and the daily application of those principles.*

DEMOCRACY lies in the minds of the people. Whatever form, expression or machinery it adopts, that form, expression or machinery, no matter how perfect in itself, will in practise be bad or good in exact accordance with whether the democracy in the minds of the people is bad or good.

Yet our attention has always been given to the machinery, not to the thing itself. Consequently the machinery changes, but the results remain much as before. Because the cause remains much as before.

You can not change that cause by the mere use of force or laws. It can be changed only by growth, development.

The only way you can make it grow or develop is by *education.*

The only kind of education equal to the task is *systematic, organized, definitely directed* education.

We have had none. Provision for teaching us and our children everything else, but none for this. *The first thing a democracy should teach is democracy.*

WE DO not even know what it is. We had thought it merely the privilege of doing as we pleased—and find ourselves ruled by minorities. We have counted on finding it in the air, in other people, everywhere but in ourselves—and find there isn't much of it anywhere, that we have become such poor citizens that we can neither operate or produce it. So we work harder than ever on architectural plans for structures to be built out of—what we haven't got. The greatest architect in the world can not build a sound house out of rotten bricks, nor the greatest economist a sound form of government out of rotten citizens. Socialism, our present system, Bolshevism, even monarchy, any *form* you please, will be rotten if the citizens are rotten, if the democracy in their minds is rotten.

It is the specialists in economics and sociology, from college professor to soap-box orator, who have betrayed us. Specialists are needed, but specialists, being specialists, have generally lost their perspective, their sense of proportion. They can use a microscope, but not a field-glass. They have been busy with the forms, forgetting both material and cause. And we have been lazily letting them do our thinking for us, merely arguing among ourselves over the secondary issues their distorted vision and traditional habit of mind have presented to our attention. It is here that our entire political education and practise has wrecked itself.

BEFORE considering the means for systematically educating ourselves in democracy, write down the particular objectives:

(1) Statement of the need to do more thinking for ourselves. (Important because that statement will be news to most Americans.)

(2) Means for stimulating more thinking for ourselves.

(3) Analysis of all present outside influences upon our thinking, their sources, motives and methods.

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(4) Statement that public opinion, under *any* form of democratic government, is the fundamental and controlling power, able to compel anything *if* it makes the effort. (News again.)

(5) Dissemination of accurate and unbiased information on issues, candidates and office-holders.

(6) Exact definition of the fundamentals of democracy. (News.)

(7) Statement of individual citizen's obligations, as well as privileges, under that definition. (News.)

(8) Fostering the practical application and use of this definition and this statement as test and measure in actual affairs.

(9) To make all the above effective, provide efficient means of *organizing public opinion*, thereby ensuring direct response of machinery to democratic will.

II. The Machinery of Democracy

IF THERE were perfect democracy in the minds of a people the question of form and machinery would be easy of settlement and almost any form would give good results. Since such perfection is not humanly possible, machinery must be chosen with anxious care. Here arises the present struggle between Socialism, our present system and Bolshevism. It is a struggle over form, not essence, and the fundamental and final test is one that is seldom applied—Which offers truest and fullest expression to the essential democracy each strives to express?

Here is the acid test of their *permanent* value.

Our present system, imperfect as now operative and probably less efficient than either of the two others, is nevertheless *in its nature* a truer and more complete expression of democracy. The Socialist and Bolshevist machineries are designed to express only partial democracy, only the economic part of man. Both are definitely based on the theory that man acts and reacts only from the impulse of economic needs. Denying any spiritual, mental, artistic or any other individual or social factors, they build their machinery on a basis of pure materialism.

Except for the specialists, with their belated and self-dazzling discovery of the tremendous effect of economic causes upon history, their lack of proportion and their habit of being swept along by an abstract idea, neither Socialism or Bolshevism could have made headway as a *general* system of government. Still less as democracy itself instead of as an incomplete expression of it.

BOTH Socialism and Bolshevism are undermined by the weakness that, after limiting man to economic functions only and putting all economic functions under government control, all economic questions must be settled by vote of a majority entirely unfamiliar with economic complexities and scientific laws.

THE fundamental error of Socialism and Bolshevism lies in mistaking themselves for complete social and economic systems. Our present system, in nature, *is* complete, though largely because it has not sufficiently developed in any direction for any part of itself to break away from the whole and attempt, as the Socialist and Bolshevist movements have attempted, to be a complete unit in itself.

THE one real problem for any democratic machinery is to combine democratic control with autocratic efficiency. Socialism and Bolshevism have made the attempt and failed. Our present system has made no attempt other than rather aimless drifting. If it makes the attempt through changed machinery alone, as the others have done, it too will fail. If it builds up both machinery and democracy itself, coordinating them, it will succeed. And if it succeeds, the attempts of Socialism and Bolshevism will be neither necessary or possible.

To succeed we must get efficiency by delegating control into as few hands as possible and at the same time progress in democracy: (1) by holding those few inexorably responsive and responsible to the *fundamental* control of the people themselves and (2) by educating ourselves to the need and habit of exercising that control and to the need of being more fit to exercise it.

But to centralize power without at the same time correspondingly building up democracy itself spells failure; to centralize without making actively effective the fundamental control by the people spells autocracy. Thanks chiefly to the specialists, we have been committing both these errors.

TO CENTRALIZE is comparatively easy, but how develop and maintain fundamental control by the people? Not by one measure but by many: initiative, referendum and recall; direct elections; numerous changes in voting method, so that an official can no longer be elected on a minority popular vote, a voter no longer lose his vote through technicalities, a minority no longer be left without delegated voice in proportion to its numbers, votes no longer made null because of geographical location; curtailment of the exaggerated power and place now held by political parties, so that party service may less undermine nation service, the people's vote no longer be limited to arbitrarily selected questions presented only in blocks, minor public servants no longer changed for party reasons only, public questions no longer handled and decided as party questions; new rules of order so that legislation can be determined more by merit and less by technicalities, manipulation and such juggling violations of majority rule as filibusters and riders.

In the next issues we shall finish out the program. Three things will be taken up—a working definition of citizenship and democracy, the power of public opinion, and a piece of machinery that will teach and practise real democracy and by means of organized public opinion enforce the will of that opinion.—A. S. H.

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THESE services of *Adventure* are free to *any one*. They involve much time, work and expense on our part, but we offer them gladly and ask in return only that you *read and observe the simple rules*, thus saving needless delay and trouble for you and us. The whole spirit of this magazine is one of friendliness. No formality between editors and readers. Whenever we *can* help you we're ready and willing to try.

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In addition to our free service department "Ask Adventure" on the pages following, *Adventure* can sometimes answer other questions within our general field. When it can, it will. Expeditions and employment excepted.

Manuscripts

Glad to look at any manuscript. We have no "regular staff" of writers. A welcome for new writers. *It is not necessary to write asking to submit your work.*

When submitting a manuscript, if you write a letter concerning it, enclose it *with* the manuscript; do *not* send it under separate cover. Enclose stamped and addressed envelope for return. All manuscripts should be typewritten double-spaced, with wide margins, not rolled, name and address on first page. We assume no risk for manuscripts or illustrations submitted, but use all due care while they are in our hands. Payment on acceptance.

We want only clean stories. Sex, morbid, "problem," psychological and supernatural stories barred. Use almost no fact-articles. Can not furnish or suggest collaborators. Use fiction of almost any length; under 3000 welcomed.

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This office, assuming no responsibility, will be glad to act as a forwarding address for its readers or to hold mail till called for, provided necessary postage is supplied.

Expeditions and Employment

While we should like to be of aid in these matters, experience has shown that it is not practicable.

Missing Friends or Relatives

Our free service department "Lost Trails" in the pages following, though frequently used in cases where detective agencies, newspapers, and all other methods have failed, or for finding people long since dead, has located a very high percentage of those inquired for. Except in case of relatives, inquiries from one sex to the other are barred.

Addresses

Order of the Restless—Organizing to unite for fellowship all who feel the wanderlust. First suggested in this magazine, though having no connection with it aside from our friendly interest. Address WAYNE EBERLY, 1833 S St., N. W., Washington, D. C.

Camp-Fire—Any one belongs who wishes to.

High-School Volunteers of the U. S.—An organization promoting a democratic system of military training in American high schools. Address *Everybody's*, Spring and Macdougal Streets, New York City.

Rifle Clubs—Address Nat. Rifle Ass'n of America, 1108 Woodward Bldg., Washington, D. C.

(*See also under "Standing Information" in "Ask Adventure."*)

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Magazines are made up ahead of time. An item received today is too late for the current issue; allow for two or three months between sending and publication.

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Ask Adventure

A Free Question and Answer Service Bureau of Information on Outdoor Life and Activities Everywhere and Upon the Various Commodities Required Therein. Conducted for *Adventure* Magazine by Our Staff of Experts.

QUESTIONS should be sent, not to this office, but direct to the expert in charge of the department in whose field it falls. So that service may be as prompt as possible, he will answer you by mail direct. But he will also send to us a copy of each question and answer, and from these we shall select those of most general interest and publish them each issue in this department, thus making it itself an exceedingly valuable standing source of practical information. Unless otherwise requested, inquirer's name and town are printed with question; street numbers not given.

When you ask for *general* information on a given district or subject the expert will probably give you some valuable general pointers and refer you to books or to local or special sources of information.

Our experts will in all cases answer to the best of their ability, using their own discretion in all matters pertaining to their departments subject only to our general rules for "Ask Adventure," but neither they nor the magazine assumes any responsibility beyond the moral one of trying to do the best that is possible. These experts have been chosen by us not only for their knowledge and experience but for their integrity and reliability. We have emphatically assured each of them that his advice or information is not to be affected in any way by whether a given commodity is or is not advertised in this magazine.

1. **Service free to anybody, provided stamped and addressed envelope is enclosed. Correspondents writing to or from foreign countries will please enclose International Reply Coupons, purchasable at any post-office, and exchangeable for stamps of any country in the International Postal Union.**
2. **Send each question direct to the expert in charge of the particular department whose field covers it. He will reply by mail. Do NOT send questions to this magazine.**
3. **No reply will be made to requests for partners, for financial backing, or for chances to join expeditions. "Ask Adventure" covers business and work opportunities, but only if they are outdoor activities, and only in the way of general data and advice. It is in no sense an employment bureau.**
4. **Make your questions definite and specific. State exactly your wants, qualifications and intentions. Explain your case sufficiently to guide the expert you question.**
5. **Send no question until you have read very carefully the exact ground covered by the particular expert in whose department it seems to belong.**

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11. North American Snow Countries Part 1
(Editor to be appointed.) Covering Minnesota, Wisconsin, a strip of Ontario between Minn. and C. P. Ry. Canoes and snow-shoes; methods and materials of Summer and Winter subsistence, shelter and travel, for recreation or business.

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12. ★ North American Snow Countries Part 2
S. E. SANGSTER ("Canuck"), L. B. 393, Ottawa, Canada. Covering Height of Land and northern parts of Quebec and Ontario (except strip between Minn. and C. P. R'y); southeastern parts of Ungava and Keewatin. Trips for sport, canoe routes, big game, fish, fur; equipment; Summer, Autumn and Winter outfits; Indian life and habits; Hudson's Bay Co. posts; minerals, timber; customs regulations. No questions answered on trapping for profit.

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H. S. BELCHER, The Hudson's Bay Company, Ft. Alexander, Manitoba, Canada. Covering Manitoba, Saskatchewan, MacKenzie and Northern Keewatin. Homesteading, mining, hunting, trapping, lumbering and travel.

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GRACE P. T. KNUDSON, Castine, Maine. Covering Japan: Commerce, politics, people, customs, history, geography, travel, agriculture, art, curios.

23. Russia and Eastern Siberia
CAPTAIN A. M. LOCHWITZKY (Formerly Lieut.-Col. I. R. A., Ret.), Quartermaster, U. S. Troops, Mercedes, Texas. Covering Petrograd and its province; Finland, Northern Caucasus; Primorsk District, Island of Sakhalien; travel, hunting, fishing; explorations among native tribes; markets, trade, curios.

24. Africa Part 1
THOMAS S. MILLER, Eagle Bird Mine, Washington, Nevada Co., Calif. Covering the Gold, Ivory and Fever Coasts of West Africa, the Niger River from the delta to Jebba, Northern Nigeria. Canoeing, labor, trails, trade, expenses, outfitting, flora; tribal histories, witchcraft, savagery.

25. Africa Part 2
GEORGE E. HOLT, Frederick, Md. Covering Morocco; travel, tribes, customs, history, etc.

26. ★ Africa Part 3. Portuguese East Africa
R. W. WARING, Corunna, Ontario, Canada. Covering trade, produce, climate, opportunities, game, wild life, travel, expenses, outfits, health, etc.

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28. ★ New Zealand, Cook Islands and Samoa
TOM L. MILLS, *The Feilding Star*, Feilding, New Zealand. Covering New Zealand, Cook Islands and Samoa. Travel, history, customs; opportunities for adventurers, explorers and sportsmen.

29. Australia and Tasmania
ALBERT GOLDIE, 424 Black Bldg., Los Angeles, Cal. Covering customs, resources, travel, hunting, sports, politics, history.

FIREARMS, PAST AND PRESENT

Rifles, shot-guns, pistols, revolvers and ammunition. (Any questions on the arms adapted to a particular locality should *not* be sent to this department but to the "Ask Adventure" editor covering the district in question.)

A.—All Firearms of Foreign Make (including comparisons between foreign and American makes.) J. B. THOMPSON, P. O. Box 1374, St. Louis, Mo.

B.—All Firearms of American Make. D. WIGGINS, Salem, Ore.

STANDING INFORMATION

For general information on U. S. and its possessions, write Sup't of Public Documents, Wash., D. C., for catalog of all Government publications.

For the Philippines and Porto Rico, the Bureau of Insular Affairs, War Dep't, Wash., D. C.

For Alaska, the Alaska Bureau, Chamber of Commerce, Central Bldg., Seattle, Wash.

For Hawaii, Hawaii Promotion Committee, Chamber of Commerce, Honolulu, T. H. Also, Dep't of the Interior, Wash., D. C.

For Cuba, Bureau of Information, Dep't of Agri., Com., and Labor, Havana, Cuba.

For Central and South America, John Barrett, Dir. Gen. Pan-American Union, Wash., D. C.

For R. N. W. M. P., Comptroller Royal Northwest Mounted Police, Ottawa, Can., or Commissioner, R. N. W. M. P., Regina, Sask. Only unmarried British subjects, age 22 to 30, above 5 ft. 8 in. and under 175 lbs., accepted.

For Canal Zone, the Panama Canal Commission, Wash., D. C.

For U. S., its possessions and most foreign countries, the Dep't of Com., Wash., D. C.

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The following "Ask Adventure" editors are now serving in our military forces. We hope you will be patient if their answers are at times delayed: Capt.-Adj. Joseph Mills Hanson; Capt. A. M. Lochwitzky.

Tasmania

IF THE South Seas interest you, this island of gardens, orchards and mines offers land for a first payment of 4 cents per acre. And it appears to be mighty good land, too, judging from the success homesteaders are having:

Question:—"Kindly give me a brief history of Tasmania—form of Government, politics, sports, etc. My father was born there, his father having charge of the British Penal Colony, ninety-one years ago. Please give me, if possible, the former names of the Island.

What do you think of two Americans' chance there with several hundred dollars apiece? Thought of going there next Summer. Please give me all the information you can."—JAS. G. BROWNE, Detroit, Mich.

Answer, by Mr. Goldie:—A veritable Garden of Eden, the Island of Tasmania is, in my opinion, one of the most beautiful spots on earth; and its climate, mild and invigorating all the year around, is unexcelled.

In the early years of its history, Tasmania was known as Van Dieman's Land. You must try and

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get the fact out of your mind that this island was ever an English penal settlement, for that is something long since forgotten by Tasmanians, and never now referred to. The class of people inhabiting the island is mostly of good British stock.

There is every opportunity in Tasmania for any one landing there with a little money who has the experience of up-to-date American ways of doing things, as the Tasmanians themselves are rather behind the times, albiet they have a thorough appreciation of new ideas.

The principal industries of Tasmania are fruit-growing, canning, wool growing, mining, timber, and ordinary classes of agriculture. The country is making big shipments of apples to Great Britain and its sister Dominions, and also does a big export trade in various kinds of canned fruits and preserves. Orcharding is therefore a very profitable occupation, as there is always a ready market for the growers' products. The wool industry, although on a small scale, as compared with Australia, provides good openings, record prices being now obtained for greasy wools.

Tasmania possesses some rich mining fields, notably Mt. Lyell, which has been one of the greatest producers of silver and copper in the world. Tin mining is conducted on a very large scale at Mt. Bischoff, and there is gold in various parts of the island.

The price of first-class crown-land is not less than $5 per acre, with one-third of that price added as a premium for credit, which extends for a period of 18 years. The second-class land is $2.50 an acre, minimum price, and for third-class land the cost is about $1.25 an acre.

The selector of a homestead area pays a cash deposit of 4 cents per acre at the time of payment, but pays nothing more toward the purchase until the fourth year, when the payment for that and the fifth year are at the rate of 20 cents per acre. For the remaining 18 years the annual payment is 50 cents an acre.

Unexplored Guiana

ADVENTURERS, here's a land of gold and fever; of little known rivers and races that have probably never set eyes on a white man. Sir Walter Raleigh named it "El Dorado." It may prove to be, if ever a gold-rush fills its valleys with Yankee prospectors:

Question:—"What is the greatest breadth and width of British Guiana? What are its principal towns and cities, and what is the ratio of white population? Railroads or mode of travel?

How is Georgetown best reached from either San Francisco, Cal., or Mazatlan, Sinaloa, Mexico?

What is the average Winter and Summer temperature, and which months are the hottest? What is the rainfall in the interior, and is there a rainy season, and if so, what months? Is there much malaria or other fevers?

What elevation do the highest mountains attain? Many mosquitoes?

What constitutes a mining claim, both lode and placer?

What is the geology of the mining districts and principal minerals obtained?

Are the mining laws liberal and may a foreigner locate mining property?

Are the higher elevations known to contain placer gold or platinum?

Is travel in the higher altitudes seriously handicapped by undergrowth?

Is it thought that the unexplored mountain ranges are mineralized?

What is the best outfitting point for a prospecting trip to the interior?

Are provisions such as required by hardy prospectors obtainable in the interior, and what is the cost of such necessities as compared with the present prices in western U. S. A. mining camps?

Are burros and small mules obtainable and what is the average cost of same?

What is the extent of Indian or other reservations, and is a prospector permitted to locate mining property thereon? Are the Indians treacherous or friendly and reliable to whites?

What wage does a mozo command and are they "worth while"?

Is game or fish plentiful? What kind?

Is a hunting and fishing license required?

Is a foreigner allowed firearms, with or without permit, and can same be secured there?

Where can I obtain maps, literature on geology, mining and mining laws?

What serious dangers, not encountered in North America, exist there, if any?'—W. E. DRUMMOND, Cananea, Sonora, Mexico.

Answer, by Mr. Young:—A good book to read is "Canoe and Camp Life in British Guiana," by C. Barington Brown, if you can obtain it down there. Now, for the questions.

British Guiana comprises the whole basin of the Essequebo, besides that of the Demerara and Berbice rivers, and the left bank of the Corentyne. Its greatest length is from Pt. Playa, at the extreme north, to extreme southern boundary at the headwaters of the Sipu River, at base of Acarai Mts. in Brazil. This distance is between 550 and 600 miles. Its greatest width is about 285 miles, from Wenamu River, Venezuelan boundary, to the city of Berbice. Ratio of population is about as follows:

Europeans	8,000
Brazilians	20,000
Africans	130,000
Asiatics (East Indian sugar plantation coolies)	120,000
Aborgines	8,000
Total	286,000

The area is 109,000 square miles and the population about 2.5 per square mile. The modes of travel principally used is river boats, canoes and Shanks' mare.

Georgetown is best reached from either San Francisco or Mazatlan by Pacific Mail to Balboa, C. Z., Panama, thence to Colon, via P. R. R., and to Port of Spain, Trinidad, by Royal Mail. There is a regular service from there to the Guianas by native lines.

The temperature ranges from 74 to 90 degrees Fahr. The average is about 82 degrees. The rainfall is heavy, amounting to 140 inches per year. It rains all the year round, except March, when it only rains occasionally. The month of March is known as Summer. The trade winds blow

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from November to February and from May to September. The heat is not oppressive but soon saps the vitality. Plenty of malaria and other fevers, dysentery, and especially ophthalmia, which is very prevalent among the natives and very contagious.

Mountains: In the west Acarai, Pacarima, or Humarida and Canuka. Highest Pt. of Pacarima is the famous Roraima 8,740 feet, the upper 1,500 feet of which is a great rock jutting perpendicularly upward. Other mountains range from 3,000 to 4,000 feet high; and those in the Pacarima are of sandstone formation and exceedingly picturesque, due to the numerous falls and cataracts on the rivers. Yes, sir, plenty of mosquitoes and other insect pests.

I haven't read the mining code of British Guiana in over four years, but as I remember it a license for prospecting costs five dollars, any mineral found must be quickly denounced to the government surveyor at Georgetown, who surveys it out and then a lease is made out by the government at a stipulated price, after which all mineral found must be gone over by the government agent and a royalty paid on same. The penalty is very strict for trying to get gold out without paying the royalty. As in most of British colonies, the ownership of minerals resides in the Crown and the right to mine them is leased. In actual practice it does not work out so bad as it sounds to us Yankees.

The geology of British Guiana is an ancient igneous and sedimentary formation, consisting of granite, quartz, and clay. The breaking down of the granite and rotted quartz and the erosion of water, action of gravity, etc., have resulted in good placer ground in places. Plenty of gold down there but hard to get to. It is not known what most of the interior contains. It is yet practically unexplored. Most of the population live right along the coast on ground the Dutch reclaimed from the sea. I have no knowledge of platinum having been found there but it doubtless exists. Travel in all places away from the rivers is seriously handicapped by undergrowth.

As for the "folk lore and Indian gossip" regarding the minerals in the mountains—they gave Walter Raleigh such a shot of Bull that he went back home with the story of "El Dorado," the gilded man, and lakes with the bottoms paved with gold. They can always tell a yarn about gold and gold, but they are never able to say just exactly where it is. Still, there's been many an eight-pound nugget of gold brought out of British and Dutch Guiana in the past twenty-five years; so you never can tell.

You can buy bush stores at Georgetown. It is local etiquette to take along negro "boys" to cook and wait on you. However, the old Alaska way is the best even down there, for it's hard to get negroes that won't steal or run away. If you are going to pack any amount of supplies it is customary to hire a head negro and let him hire the rest of the train. They work for very little, but don't expect much out of them. The gold pan of British Guiana is known as a *battel*, which is larger and shallower than our kind. Salt meat, beans, and dried codfish are staples for bush use.

If you stop off in Colon you could get some canal employee to get you some good clothing, ammunition, etc., from the commissaries. He is not allowed to do this, but Uncle Sam winks at it when it's not done for reselling. This is just a tip, and supplies are cheaper in the commissaries than they are here in New York. In 1917 Henry Holt & Co. of New York City printed a book called "Treasure," by Gertrude S. Mathews, which is the personal experience of an old prospector set down by her and contains some good photos and dope on Dutch Guiana which is practically the same kind of country as British Guiana. I am unable to give present-day prices of supplies in Georgetown, but I found native stuff cheap enough and imported stuff very high. I always use native food and supplies when they will serve the purpose. Perhaps that's the reason I have no stomach left. You couldn't use a mule or burro down there. Use a negro for packing. He's just as cheap and just as stubborn.

At present there are only about 8,000 aborigines in the country. The wildest of them have moved back further into Brazil and what are left are fairly tame. They are not very reliable and no white man can understand their angle. I think you can get a very good negro "boy" for four shillings a week and his grub.

Game: Animals: Marsh deer, labba, aguti, water haas, peccary, ant bear, jaguar, ocelot, armadillo, opossum, bats and vampires and other small game.

Birds: Campanero, calf-bird, crab-eater, parrots, toucans, macaws, hawks, owls, etc., various humming birds.

Reptiles: Alligators, lizards, boas, perai—cannibal fish which Roosevelt saw in Brazil—sting-ray, electric eel, and many kinds of fish.

A man does not require hunting and fishing license and no license to carry firearms if he is going back into the bush. It's a good plan to get in touch with the governor or some of his staff and lay your plans before them when you first arrive. This will make them feel honored and they will give you many useful tips about the bush.

The best maps I know of are in the big Rand, MacNally atlases that are to be found in every large library. They are immense books, about three feet long and about three inches thick, and I never saw but one individual who owned one. This was an Englishman I met out at Sayville, Long Island. I have often laid off to price one, but have never had the price to invest. They must easily be worth $25 if not more. You might be able to get a good map by writing to the Rand, MacNally Co. in Chicago.

The geology of British Guiana is something for geologists to wrangle about. Not one of them is able to explain the formations and it defies comparison with anything else in the world. High bars are to be found on top of mountains, and on top of ten or fifteen feet of alluvial deposit to boot, with the pay-dirt at the top and getting thinner as you go down. Here and there are to be found "savannahs" or little cleared spots of a few acres absolutely bare of trees, and with the quartz, or granite, ground up as if it had been in a crusher. Something must have been doing down there at some time or other. There are a great many dangers to be encountered down there and that are not to be met with here in this country, but the chief one is the lassitude of the climate and the consequent losing of energy which lays a person liable to any disease that comes along.

Rivers of British Guiana: The longest of the rivers is the Essequebo, which rises in the extreme

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south and is over 600 miles long, counting its windings, the Corentyne of about the same length, the Berbice, 400 miles, and the Demerara, 250 miles. Other rivers are the Berima, Waini, and the Pomeroon, besides which are the great affluents of the Essequebo, the Cuyuni, and Masaruni, as well as hundreds of so-called creeks. The Corentyne, Berbice, Demerara, and Barima are navigable for about 100 miles from their mouth, but the Essequebo, Cuyuni and Masaruni are obstructed by rapids about 50 miles up, from which point canoes are used and portages made around the falls. The joint estuary of the three last-named rivers is about 20 miles broad and contains a number of islands, among which are the most important ones of Wakenaam, Leguan, Hog Island, and Troolie Island.

British Guiana is divided into three counties—Essequebo, Demerara, and Berbice. Georgetown, Demerara, about 60,000, is capital of the whole colony. New Amsterdam, Berbice, has a population of about 9,000. Bartica is the principal town of Essequebo. The last named is a point of departure for gold hunters and miners. There is also the nucleus of a town in North West district called Morawhanna. There are many small settlements along the coast alternating with the plantations and many small settlements, or boat landings along the rivers which look bigger on the map than they do at close hand. Conjure with such names as this: Berlin, Akyma, Vigflaam, Daageraad, Catherinensburg, Cartunie, Glasgow, Manocco, Layfield, Cumaku, Aputerie, Turuma, Atarai, Ackar, Cadui, and Queenstown!

I wouldn't go in without a big outfit. Take my word for it, she's a lonesome, rough, cruel, feverish, heart-breaking trip. If you were back here in the States, especially in San Francisco, I think you could get up a party by putting an ad in one of the papers in the "want" columns.

Money in Weeds

MANY a dollar is being made by those who gather common weeds—which really are herbs—for market. Even the well-known dandelion may be turned into a bank account:

Question:—"I have been told that there are in the woods in this section (Willsboro, Essex County, New York, on Lake Champlain) a number of roots, herbs and gums, that can be gathered as a kind of side line which would pay for time spent in doing so; also that there is a market for certain tree seeds.

I wish you would advise me if this is true, and if this is so what they are and where they could be disposed of?"—L. HATCH, Willsboro, N. Y.

Answer, by Mr. Spears:—If you will write to H. R. Lathrop, 110 Beekman St., New York City, and S. B. Penick & Co., 254 Front St., New York City, they will send you price-lists of herbs, telling you how much they will pay for the roots, leaves, bark, and other parts of herbs and plants, including trees. There are probably thirty or forty common weeds in your neighborhood which have a market value, and if you send Lathrop Co. ten cents in stamps they will send you a booklet describing many of these weeds and how to prepare them for market.

Also, write to Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., for pamphlets relating to weeds used in medicine, and markets for same.

Dandelion root, for example, sells, dried, for about twenty-five cents a pound, and many other roots in proportion. Gums, too, should sell well. Ask about their prices—wild cherry, spruce, balsam, etc.

Don't Ask Too Much of a Good Fellow

BECAUSE so many of you know and have listened to Dr. Robertson of Honduras, through our Camp-Fire, it seems you have suddenly deluged him with letters asking about his country. Please remember he is a busy doctor and that, while he kindly took time to answer the first few of you, he now rightly has to call "quit." Address your inquiries, instead, to Edgar Young, our Central American expert, whose address appears on page 188.

LOST TRAILS

NOTE—We offer this department of the "Camp-Fire" free of charge to those of our readers who wish to get in touch again with old friends or acquaintances from whom the years have separated them. For the benefit of the friend you seek, *give your own name if possible.* All inquiries along this line, unless containing contrary instructions, will be considered as intended for publication in full with inquirer's name, in this department, at our discretion. We reserve the right, in case inquirer refuses his name, to substitute any numbers or other names, to reject any item that seems to us unsuitable, and to use our discretion in all matters pertaining to this department. Give also your own full address. We will, however, forward mail through this office, assuming no responsibility therefor. We have arranged with the Montreal *Star* to give additional publication in their "Missing Relative Column," weekly and daily editions, to any of our inquiries for persons last heard of in Canada. Except in case of relatives, inquiries from one sex to the other are barred.

HUNT, CHARLES. Known to be in Elkhart, Ind., in 1910. Any information concerning him will be greatly appreciated.—Address R. H. WARREN, 418 Riley St., Buffalo, New York.

SHEPHERD, GUY M. Last heard of at Eberts Field, Lonoke, Ark. Write to your old pal "Charlie."—Address Cecil, Ark., R. No. 1, Box 62.

BULLARD, DEXTER. Who worked at McGill, Nevada in 1917, or any of my old friends, write to JOHN J. RUDEN (Route No. 1), Roseburg, Ore.

ROSINOFF, SAMUEL. Please let your mother know where you are. She is very lonely and always thinking of you. Her present address is 1804 Pitkin Ave., Brooklyn, N. Y.—MORRIS KIRSHNER.

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BEATON, SERGT.-MAJOR GORDON M. Write your wife explaining absence. Letters for you, Buffalo Post-Office.

NORAS, JOHN. Last heard of in Twodot, Montana, in 1914. Any information concerning him will be greatly appreciated by his brother.—Address J. B. NORAS, Box 71, Depew, New York.

Inquiries will be printed three times, then taken out. In the first February issue all unfound names asked for during the past two years will be reprinted alphabetically.

BOYLE, J. GORDON. Also known as "Lucky" and "Happy." Resident of Washington, D. C. Height about 5 feet 5 inches; weight one hundred twenty; dark hair, very white skin. Probably in Civil Service.—Address THOS. B. STEWART, care of A. R. Co., Brass, No. 4, Rockwood, Me.

THOMAS, JAMES. Living in Wheeling, West Va. Last heard of in Baltimore, Md., when he was starting for Fayetteville, N. C. Would like to communicate with him.—Address "BOSTON JIM" or JAMES GAVICH, 144 West Sixth St., South Boston, Mass.

WARD, JOS. M. Write your old pal. Important. At old address.—H. F. BLAKESLEE.

EARLE, WILLIAM F. Last heard of in San Francisco, Cal., and prior to that time at the Hercules Club, Los Angeles, Cal. Am inquiring on behalf of his relatives who have something to communicate to him. Any information concerning him will be greatly appreciated.—Address G. VON PHUL JONES, 818 Real Estate Trust Bldg., Broad & Chestnut Sts., Phila., Pa.

BJERKANDER, HENRY or HENRY BENSON. Last heard from in the vicinity of Aberdeen, Montesano and Cosmopolis, Washington. Mother and father in Sweden wish to know his present address, if he is still living. Please send information to JOHN J. RUDEN, Route 2, Roseburg, Oregon.

Please notify us at once when you have found your man.

HOOK, MRS. MARY. Sister. Formerly Miss Mary Socha. Came to New York from Austria in March, 1914. Later married and moved to Ohio.—Address SGT. PETER SOCHA, care of School of Bakers and Cooks, Camp Sheridan, Alabama.

TOMPKINS, ROBT. A. Master signal electrician. Last heard of at Camp Kearney, but left for home camp down Texas. Please write your old friend.—Address CARTOONIST JNO. M. LASSAR, Field Clerk, P. O., Camp Kearney, Calif.

Please notify us at once when you have found your man.

CALEB, SUSANNA. Colored, about 80 years old. Used to be housekeeper for us when I was a child. Last heard of in Houston, Texas, where her three daughters, Georgiana, Rebecca and Lizzy now live. She may be in Galveston or in Tucson, Arizona. Will be grateful for any information.—Address MRS. ELMA LEAVERTON, Mammoth, Arizona.

COATE, TOM. Tom, write at once, very important. M. F. COATE, 225 Grace St., West Tampa, Fla.

BUTLER, JACK ORMONDE. "Ormonde" of Germantown, Pa., 5 feet 11 inches tall, blue eyes, dark hair, ruddy complexion, weight 175. Quite disposition. A soldier of fortune in revolution in Mexico in 1911, where he saved my life and adopted me as his brother when I could not take care of myself. Any information will be greatly appreciated.—Address CHEROKEE BUTLER, Gen. Del., Philadelphia, Pa.

THE following have been inquired for in full in either the Mid-May or First June issues of Adventure. They can get name of inquirer from this magazine:

ALAREZ, M. H.; Ambrose, Shris; Berman, Herman A.; Beyrsdoffer, A.; Burdick, E. C.; Byars, Alexander Terry; Coe, C. A.; Cooper, Ted; Costelloe, Jack; Dalton, George; Delamatir, I. H.; Dickey, Hubert; Dickinson, C. L.; Ducette, Hector; Egan, D. Jack; Gallaway, Karl H.; Gates, Walter C.; Houghton, Frank Wentworth; Hourahan, John C.; Kelly, Thomas Francis; Lindrot; Alexander; Mohan, Art; Moody, Earl W.; Nein, Wm. Olson, Hjalmar; Scott, Harry; Taylor, Alfred; Tebow, Ralph E.; Wilson, Montgomery Earl.

MANUSCRIPTS UNCLAIMED

HASTLAR GAL BREATH, Ruth Gilfillan, Lee Hays; Jack P. Robinson; Ray Ozmer; Miss Jimmie Banks; O. B. Franklin; Bryon Chrisholm; G. H. Bennett.

PLEASE send us your present address. Letters forwarded to you at address given us do not reach you.—Address J. E. COX, care *Adventure*.

THE TRAIL AHEAD
FIRST JULY ADVENTURE

Ten vigorous stories of adventure in old lands and new come to you with the First July number, out June 3d. One or two will make you chuckle.

FLAT BEHIND THE EARS — ***By Norman Springer***
The boatswain who was a Jonah and the sergeant who could throw "pineapples" will give you many laughs—and a thrill.

SALT OF THE SEA — **A Two-Part Story. Conclusion** — ***By J. Allan Dunn***
Through strange lands, where strange people live, wander *Trevennion* and his party in this story of the days of Drake.

WHAT THE OLD HOSS DIED OF — ***By Charles Tenney Jackson***
In which *Col. T. Sambola Tunk* schemes to gain a few laps on the Mississippi dry law with a dark horse in the race.

CONVERGING TRAILS — ***By Edgar Young***
Down in South America, *Eddie Roach*, weakling, gets in with some real men.

ON THE TRAIL OF TIPPOO TIB — **A Six-Part Story. Part V** — ***By Talbot Mundy***
It is a strange crew that the *Queen of Sheba* bears over African waters as *Yerkes* and his crowd search for the ivory and the hidden caves of Elgon.

THE HUNTING PARTY — ***By W. P. Lawson***
Indians off the reservation, a forest ranger, and a mountaineer and his son cross each other's trails in this story of New Mexico.

SHEP'S DECISION — ***By Everett Saunders***
When *Buck Pritchard*, camp-tender for five thousand sheep, needs advice, he goes to his best friend—*Shep*, his dog.

BIG BALSAM JOE — ***By Hapsburg Liebe***
A story of the Unaka Mountains and of a man who was born to be hanged.

AN HOUR — ***By Clyde B. Hough***
A flying spear in the Philippine night, and a strange hour begins for *Nolte*.

COLONEL SUTHERLAND INTERVENES — ***By Gordon Young***
Another story of *Colonel Sutherland* and San Francisco in '49.

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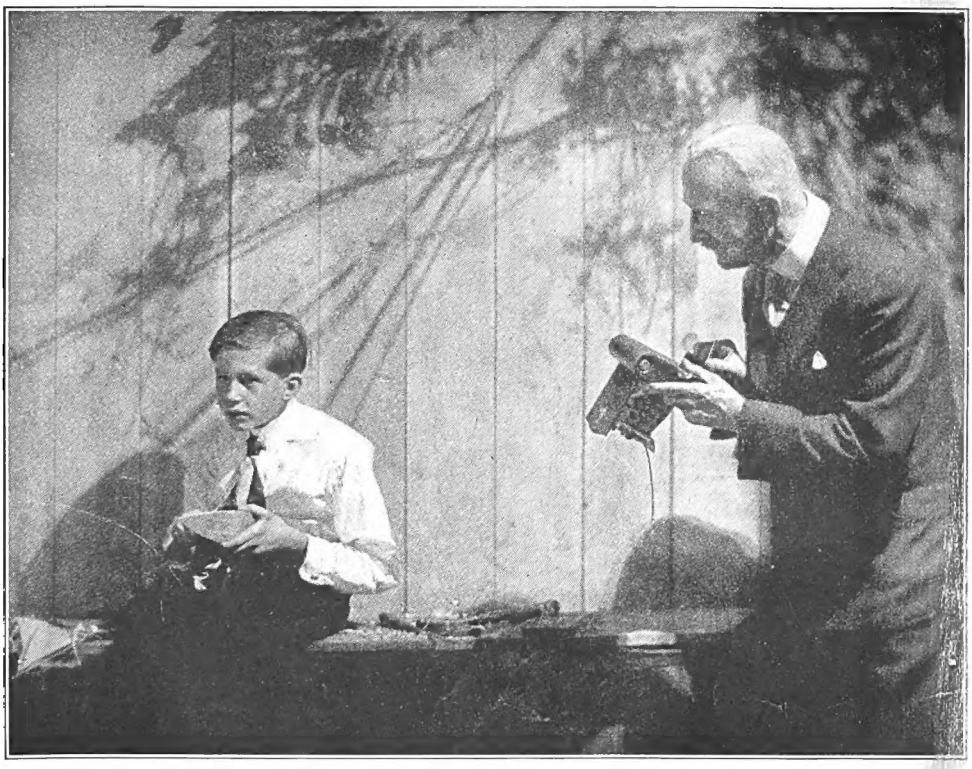
Make the Kodak Record Autographic.



For the Days to Come.

Building his boat of pine and dreaming, as he works, of the days when he will sail a real ship on a real ocean—a regular boy, that.

And Dad, with his Kodak, has caught the boyish story. Now he is writing the autographic record—the date and title on the film; the record that will give double value to the picture when time has played sad tricks with memory.

Make the family chronicle complete. Let every picture of the children bear at least a date. It's all very simple, as simple as taking the picture itself—with an

Autographic Kodak

EASTMAN KODAK CO., ROCHESTER, N. Y., *The Kodak City*

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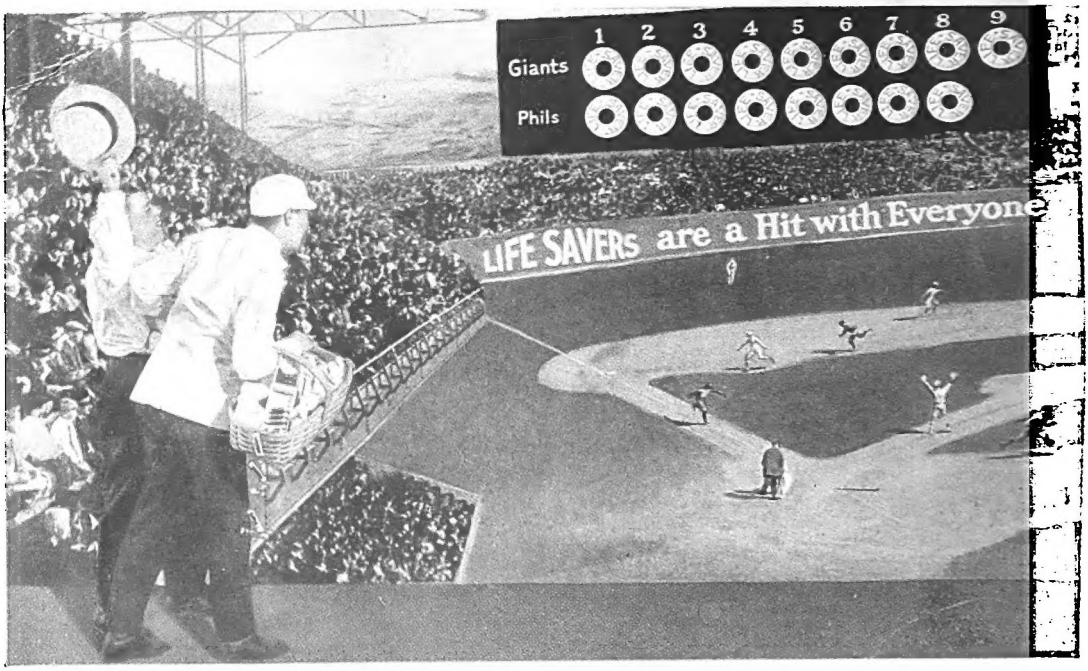

A Hit—It's a Life Saver!

When your batting average is low, slide a Life Saver between your teeth and see what a big assist it is. It will put a shortstop to any foul taste, and correct all errors of digestion.

Spread Life Savers out on a home plate where you can pitch into them. These delicious mint-rings help you to center your thoughts right off the bat.

LIFE SAVERS

THE CANDY MINT WITH THE HOLE

If you run across a dealer so base as to offer a substitute, ball him out. When you catch him off the bag like that, you are entitled to score him and then make a home run. A good Life Saver team is PEP-O-MINT and WINT-O-GREEN. Another good one is CL-O-VE and LIC-O-RICE. Be sure the hole goes clear through—that is genuine Life Saver.

MINT PRODUCTS COMPANY
New York Montreal

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